173 at a royal homestead, and was led by a nominee of the king, usually
[561] a prince or chief. Other royal homesteads, called 'heads', were in
charge of princes and were the foci of allegiance of groups of
chiefdoms within the kingdom.

173 Thus every man owed allegiance in several places. He had
obligations to his agnatic lineage, and in particular to that segment
631 of the lineage within the chiefdom to which he belonged. Local
[613] matters, questions arising over land and cattle, and quarrels
[627] between neighbours, were settled by discussion between agnates or
by reference to the lieutenant appointed by the chief to look after
the district. Every man was also a member of a division of his
chiefdom, and hunted wild beasts with his fellows in the division.
[621] He was a member of his chiefdom as against other chiefdoms, and
looked to his chief for assistance in his affairs, even as the chief
relied on the support of his people in his own struggles with other
[619] chiefs. In the nation, every man belonged to a regiment, fought and
danced alongside his regimental age-mates drawn from every chiefdom,
and was expected to support the prince who commanded the
[701] regiment. Finally he was a member of a 'head' and within his
regiment was grouped together with others from the same head.
A man might change his chiefdom, but his allegiance to regiment
and head were fixed.[5]

178 The Ngoni State was founded in the 1820's by men and women,
perhaps a thousand in number, who had grown up in a social
619 system of this kind. Certain parts of the system were dropped,
others were developed. In effect, the system was simplified and
adapted to the life of migrant brigandage which the Ngoni enjoyed
for some seventy years. The old alignment of agnatic lineages
[613] disappeared, for the great majority of Ngoni joined the system by
capture, not by birth. In its place a quasi-agnatic residential
[621] system was evolved, in which men and women bore allegiance not
to their own agnatic seniors but to their lord or captor. This
system was, however, tied in with an arrangement of royal homesteads
which in itself was a development of the division of polygynous
households into great, left- and right-hand 'houses'. There
were no chiefdoms within the nation, for the nation began, as it were,
[561] as a *tabula rasa* without significant relics of earlier chiefly alignments.
The age-set system remained the basis of military organization,
[701] but there were no royal or chiefly commanders appointed
over regiments and there were no regimental barracks. Instead the
178 bulk of the population lived in large villages which resembled the
621 former royal homesteads and military barracks but in which men

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[5] Based on Bryant, *Olden times*, and Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu'.

lived with their wives and children, and not all of which had royal 178
headmen. The system of 'heads' disappeared, at least in the Ngoni
group with which we are most concerned, and within their regi- 621
ments men were grouped in terms of their place in the residential [701]
system.

3. *Foundation of the State*

The Nguni chiefdoms of the seventeenth and early eighteenth 173
centuries were, according to all accounts, comparatively small.
There were many of them and they were unstable. After about 1775 643
the pattern of political alignment began to alter and larger states
appeared. By 1810 three kingdoms, the Mthethwa, Ndandwe and
Qwabe,[4] dominated the rest and in 1818 Zwide, king of the
Ndandwe, whose territory was in what is now northern Zululand,
killed the Mthethewa king. He then turned his attention to Shaka,
an Mthethwa by political affiliation who had conquered his
kinsmen the Qwabe and had become the effective leader of the
Mthethwa kingdom. Unfortunately for Zwide, he was defeated in
1819 by Shaka and thereupon the Ndandwe kingdom broke up.
Some segments became part of Shaka's expanding State, others [167]
moved off to the north. About 1821[5] Zwangendaba, who had been
for a time a sub-chief of Zwide, led a party of refugees north-
eastwards into the region of Delagoa Bay. The route probably
taken by Zwangendaba and his followers, and by other Ngoni
groups, is shown in Map A. Near Delagoa Bay Zwangendaba
found Soshangane, a classificatory brother of Zwide,[6] fighting with
Nxaba, another minor chief, both of them refugees like Zwangen-
daba from the rising power of Shaka. All three parties raided the [721]
indigenous Tsonga peoples and made captives fight alongside [727]
their new masters.

Zwangendaba quarrelled with Soshangane and moved on 173
farther north. He took with him his new Tsonga adherents and 167
also some small groups of Swazi and related peoples who had fled
independently from Shaka and who now placed themselves under

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[4] I do not claim any consistency in my spelling of indigenous names and
other words. As far as possible I have endeavoured to follow Atkins, 'Spelling [104]
Nyanja'. However I have written the unaspirated post-alveolar affricative in its
old form *ch* whenever the new form *c* might be confused with the radical dental
click consonant represented by *c* in Zulu.

[5] cf. Bryant, *Olden times*, p. 459. He is followed by Poole, *Native tribes*, pp. 5, 17, 71. Lancaster, 'Chronology', pp. 77, 84, gives 1823 and Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 15, has 1823 or 1824. Young, *History*, p. 109, and Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 8, both have 1825. Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, p. 272, says Zwangendaba left in 1823, while Coxhead, *Native tribes*, p. 20, says he left in the 1850's.

[6] For the exact relationship between Soshangane and Zwide, see Bryant, *Olden times*, pp. 161, 279, 454.

[Text continues on page 9]

successive head of a major segment memorialized in this way, but 611 621
the major divisions of his polygynous household as well. 631

6. *Splitting the State*

When splits occurred in the State, the cleavages were along 631
segmentary, and not age-set, lines. The headquarters of the highest 668
segment was differentiated from the major subdivisions within that
segment, and the various divergent groups can be identified by the 178
different segments which they represented. Once fission had taken place, a realignment of segments was sometimes necessary. When after the death of Zwangendaba his great wife's segment was split, in each divergent group the man who was nearest in the line of [622]
succession to head of her segment claimed to be the rightful heir, and on the strength of that claim assumed leadership of the group.

Fission in the State was the end result of segmentation within it. Here we are using these two terms for two different processes. By segmentation we mean the process by which any social group becomes subdivided internally while retaining its own unity and [121]
cohesion. By fission we mean the process by which a social group divides into two or more distinct groups, so that the original group disappears as a social entity.[42] Fission in the Ngoni State occurred without affecting the arrangement of segments within each group, but did disrupt the highest segment of all, within which the divergent groups had hitherto been contained. Segmentation was a process of growth taking place at all levels but particularly at the bottom of the hierarchy of political groups, while fission was a process occurring only at the highest level. The process of segmentation in one generation could not alter the formal arrangement of higher segments determined in the previous generation, even though with each generation there was in fact an effective shift in the distribution of political power accompanied by spatial differentiation. The process of fission did not bring into being any new segments, but merely dissolved the highest segment of all as a cohering political unit. The two processes were thus formally and in reality quite distinct, even though it is clear that they were not independent of one another. Increasing divergence of interest found expression at first in the creation of separate segments and ultimately in the formation of separate states.

The processes of segmentation and of spatial differentiation [669]
within the State were in general peaceful. Fission was a hazardous

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[42] This use of terms differs from that of Fortes. He uses 'segmentation' to refer to a *state* of internal subdivision within a group, and 'fission' to refer to the *process* of internal subdivision. cf. Fortes, *Web of kinship, passim.* I am indebted to Mrs. U. P. Mayer for this observation.

631 procedure. Segment 2 broke away from segment 3 and later
178 rejoined it peaceably, but other instances of fission were accom-
662 panied by fighting. The leader of each divergent group rallied his
[669] warriors, the one to protect his flight, the other to pursue and
annihilate the departing traitors. If the flight was successful, the
leader of the new State assumed the salutations and marks of rank
[643] of a Paramount Chief and held his own first fruits ceremony. The
[786] internal organization of his State and of the one he had left continued on the same lines as before. This seems to have been the sequence of events when Zulu Gama, Ciwele Ndhlovu, and segment 7 each broke away from the main body. When the residue of segment 1 broke away from segment 4, the dissident group destroyed the crops of those who remained, but Chibambo does not mention fighting on that occasion.[43] There are two possible instances of a divergent group going away to join some other state. Segment 7 was associated for a while with Mirambo and his Ruga-ruga, and Zulu Gama joined forces in Tanganyika with the Maseko Ngoni, now in southern Nyasaland.[44] But neither of these alliances lasted long. As we would expect there is less evidence for the unsuccessful attempts at fission which it seems reasonable to assume must have taken place. I did, however, collect one clear account of a regional governor who was thought by Zwangendaba to be lagging behind on the migration with the intention of deserting
with his segment. Zwangendaba sent an army against the regional
[669] governor, who was killed. His segment, under the charge of his
son, was forced to live in the village of a lieutenant of Zwangendaba's father. It is said that Zwangendaba continued to punish the would-be rebels by drafting members of the segment to other parts of the residential system from time to time.

619 Thus in one sense the State was held together by armed force.
Certainly there were mystical values associated with the chieftain-
642 ship. It is now difficult to gain much precise information on this
[643] topic but it is apparent from present-day practice and from comparative evidence that the chiefly office was hedged about with mystical sanctions and that the chief was no mere secular ruler. Yet it is also clear that these values were associated with the office of chieftainship rather than with the particular occupant of the office, and that they were linked to successful military achievement. We might also suggest that because so many men became Ngoni only after they had grown up in quite different cultures, mystical

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[43] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 34.

[44] Stanley, *Livingstone*, p. 289, and *Dark Continent*, i, p. 499; Hatchell, 'Angoni', *passim*.

619 brought more support for his lord; but as the segment expanded
631 his chances of setting himself up as a chief increased and his loyalty
became less certain. Thus the appeal to armed force came only as
one phase in a general struggle for power carried on simultaneously
at many different levels and by a variety of methods. The con-
flicting ambitions of each lord, each a potential rival of the State,
[669] combined to maintain the State and to reduce the likelihood of
successful fission.

The conflict between identification with one's lord and
692 differentiation from him, between what Fortes has called the
643 centripetal and centrifugal forces in a segmentary society, is brought
681 out clearly in the enforcement of the death penalty. Wiese implies
631 that only the Paramount Chief had the legal power to sentence
adulterers to death and that this offence was the ground for the
[684] majority of death sentences.[44] However, my own informants stated
that senior lieutenants did sometimes sentence people to death
without referring the matter to the Paramount Chief. The Chief
would later come to hear of an incident of this kind and would then
either praise the lieutenant for acting in the interests of the Chief
and for ruling his people well, or else abuse him for usurping the
powers of the Chief and warn him to be more careful in future. A
successful lieutenant might establish his own major segment and
eventually his own State; but if he moved in this direction prema-
[687] turely he was likely to be killed for treason. This same inherent
conflict exists to-day, albeit with different groupings and different
sanctions.

7. *Stability*

611 The most striking differences between the residential system
and most lineage systems were the high rate of segmentation, and
619 the flexibility of the system. Segmentation in a lineage system
178 depends basically on the unalterable processes of human repro-
duction and maturation. Until a man's children become adults
his agnatic segment cannot split. The Ngoni, by recruiting many
[161] of their members when they were already grown up, were able to
increase their population at a prodigious rate and with it the degree
[597] of segmentation of the State. As the Ngoni army increased in size,
so it became easier for them to capture more people, so that what
we may describe as an inflationary spiral in population was set up.
The Ngoni State was like a snowball which grows larger and larger
as it is pushed from place to place, but still remains uniform
throughout. At last it becomes unwieldly and must be broken

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[44] Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 471-2, and 'Geschichte', pp. 189-90.

before it can be moved further. The same accumulation of snow 178
then begins again with each fragment. 611

We can readily see that this system was one of great flexibility. 619
The rules of the system were fairly definite, and the principles of
agnatic descent and primogeniture were never violated. Yet it was
a system very susceptible to manipulation, and one appropriate
to a society with a rapidly expanding population recruited mainly
by capture. The relationships between a man and his wives, his
sons, and his other dependants provided the basis for differen- [595]
tiation within his segment, but they did not determine in advance
which wife should be made leader of a bevy, which bevy should get
most dependants, which of his younger sons he should favour,
which dependants he would appoint as lieutenants.

Without a continual inflow of captives this wide pattern of
segmentation might not have produced anything more than a [727]
lineage system on the same lines as the Zulu and Swazi. The
captives were the bulk which swelled the segments, which benefited [597]
one segment at the expense of another. This system provided
quasi-agnatic affiliation to people whose actual parentage was
unknown or irrelevant. Because of this source of supply, much
greater segmentation was achieved in each generation than was
possible in an orthodox lineage system. The whole system lasted
only seventy-seven years for the Fort Jameson group, corresponding
roughly to three generations, yet almost the whole population of
the Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba, numbering perhaps [173]
half a million people, could at the end of that time trace quasi-
agnatic ascent back to him or his forebears.

Membership of age-sets gave rise to one set of bonds which [561]
cut across the lines of segmentary division; those bonds created by
marriage gave rise to another. A man in one segment was linked 611
by ties of affinity to men in several others, and because of these ties 571
interacted with them on formal and informal occasions, exchanged 582
cattle with them, and had a joint interest with them in their
common descendants. Though segments were not exogamous, a
wife from a structurally distant segment had in general a higher
status and was more likely to be selected as leader of a bevy than [554]
was one from the same minor segment as her husband. Within a
segment a son of the lord might marry the daughter of a lieutenant,
and lieutenants sometimes married daughters of their lord, thus
blending the bonds of affinity with those of quasi-agnation. As the
heads of segments, married women played a more important role [562]
than we usually associate with them in strongly patrilineal societies. 611
The lady of a segment retained her connexion with the segments 602

611 to which she had belonged before her marriage, and in particular
602 sent some of her children to her parents to be cared for until
[855] adolescence. In this way a web of affinal ties was built up, cutting
across both the residential and age-set systems and acting against
the fissile tendencies in the former.[47]

The ties that bound a man to his age-mates and to his
561 matrilateral kin cut across those linking him to his lord and to his
602 dependants. Nevertheless, it seems probable that even without this
arrangement of cross-cutting ties, the segmentary system itself was
not easily fissile. The State as a whole was primarily held together
64 by its enemies, the external enemies who made it unsafe for small
182 bodies of Ngoni to venture across the no-man's-land on their own,
and the internal rivals who competed for the Paramount Chief's
favour and who bided their time until they could lead off their
major segments as independent states. The flexibility of the
system allowed men to achieve power within it, and provided a way
of balancing the interests of different groups, as well as making
possible the few instances of fission that did occur. The Paramount
643 Chief was powerful, not only because of his mystical attributes and
of the military successes of his people, but because he was the
government. Through him the common interests of the tribe as a
whole were expressed in an organized manner as against the
interests of minority groups. Despite its segmentary form, Ngoni
society was a State.

In later years two changes took place which increased the
177 stability of the State, at least from a short-term point of view. In
the first place, the external environment altered due to the penetration
into the central African hinterland by Arabs, Portuguese
and British. With this topic we shall deal in Chapter III. The
178 second change, which seems to have taken place among the Ngoni
631 of northern Nyasaland, was in the internal organization of the
State. In that particular group, neighbouring tribes were brought
[636] under subjection as political groups, not as individuals, and the
conquered peoples were either allowed to retain their own chiefs
as subordinate rulers or else were attached in large batches to
various important headquarters. A distinction emerged between
the aristocracy and the conquered peoples, and the army was no
[563] longer simply the aggregation of age-sets but included quasi-
[701] professionals supplied by a near-by unconquered Cewa chief
Mwase Kasungu, who were armed with guns. Similar changes
? may well have taken place among the Ngoni groups in Tanganyika,
who were more closely involved with the slave trade to the coast

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[47] See the discussion of affinal linking in my *Marriage*, pp. 10-11.

than were the groups further inland. However, the evidence 631
suggests that no great changes of this kind took place among the 178
Fort Jameson group under Mpezeni, and it is therefore with changes in the external environment of the State that we shall be chiefly concerned.

In this early period, between 1821 and about 1885, there was 178
for most of the time a situation in which the forces attaching people
to the State were stronger than those tending to split it. The age- 64
set system, the web of affinal ties, the attachment of segment members to their lord, the reliance of a lord on the support of his dependants, and the external opposition of all non-Ngoni, these all held the State together. Shifts in the balance of power could be made without disrupting the State because the State was continually expanding, and expansion gave it flexibility. The weakest links in the State were at the top, and it was these that were most strained as the State grew in numbers and in degree of segmentation. Under critical conditions, as on the death of the Paramount Chief or when the need for food necessitated a move from one tribal site to another, these were the links that gave way and fresh independent States were formed. Fission in the State led to consolidation of ties in each divergent group, but the same processes leading to further fission began again at once.

During the period of migration the Ngoni flourished. They 167
were successful brigands on the march. Yet they were brigands
in a poor land, and despite their military successes their economy 721
remained one of subsistence cultivation, even though others did 648
some of the cultivation for them. They were well organized for war and their enemies were not, but both they and their enemies were poor people relying on shifting cultivation with a poor technology and with access to only moderately valuable natural resources. The hinterland of Africa provided the Ngoni with an area within which they could operate successfully, but this area was bounded by the lands of wealthier and mightier peoples. Towards the end of the century the boundaries of the area began to contract. The Ngoni found themselves in conflict not with subsistence cultivators using hoes and spears, but with peoples using writing and guns and possessing apparently limitless resources of cloth, beads and gunpowder. We now have to turn to the story of the Ngoni struggle with these Arab and European invaders.

Chapter Three

DEFEAT

1. Structural change 2. Portugal or Britain 3. Concession hunters 4. European consolidation 5. Friction 6. Fighting 7. Cattle 8. The end of a system

1. *Structural change*

178 619 64 THE STRUGGLES of the Ngoni during the middle of the nineteenth century were with groups of roughly the same character as themselves. The processes at work in the Ngoni social system were in the main repetitive. The State grew in size, split, and grew again, but it was still largely the same kind of State as before. Even though there were important differences between the Ngoni and their opponents, particularly after 1835, those whom they encountered were sufficiently like themselves to be absorbed into the system without difficulty. In the nomenclature of Radcliffe-Brown and the Wilsons, there was social circulation in the Ngoni State but little change in its structural form.[1] For this reason we have been concerned in our analysis so far with but few of the historical details of that period, and have dealt with history only in an abstract and generalized form. Many of the inconsistencies [114] between various versions of the tribal legend have not been significant. For example, Chief Ciwele Ndhlovu of Dowa broke off from the main body of Ngoni, according to some writers before, and according to others after, the split between Mpezeni and Mwambera.[2] It does not matter for our particular purpose which of these versions is correct, for we are here concerned only to establish that from time to time senior lieutenants did split off with their segments to form independent chiefdoms. This process, of which Ciwele's secession is an example, was essentially the same before and after the Mpezeni-Mwambera split.

After 1880 Ngoni history entered a new phase, and social 648 178 121 processes began to operate which were not repetitive. Changes began to occur in the form of the Ngoni social field, for instead of interacting with groups similar to themselves, the Ngoni became involved in a much wider network of social relations. This change

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[1] Radcliffe-Brown, 'On social structure', p. 4; Wilson, *Social change*, p. 58.

[2] cf. Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 32-3; Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 18; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 186.

of scale,[8] as we may call it, was accompanied by major changes not 648
only in the positions occupied by individuals in Ngoni society but 178
also in the form of Ngoni society itself. We have to analyse at this 121
stage a non-repetitive process, by which the autonomous Ngoni state, organized by a segmentary residential system and an age-set system, was changed into a dependent unit in a system of Native Authorities forming part of a world-wide colonial empire. For this reason the details of the process are worth noting, for in Ngoni history they are unique and largely determine the form of modern Ngoni society. Having established this significant sequence of events, we are then in a position to look at the same set of facts in a wider context. For what is unique and non-repetitive for the Ngoni may be repetitive in a wider context. The Ngoni are only one tribe among a myriad of tribes, and what happened to them has also happened to many others. Similar sequences of events, each unique for the particular tribe concerned, have occurred throughout the world at various periods of time whenever small autonomous systems have been absorbed into large and more highly resourceful ones. We can therefore look at Ngoni history from 1880 onwards as either unique, from the point of view of the Ngoni, or as typical, or at least probably typical, of a repetitive process which has often occurred in the development of any empire.

Conveniently, at least some of the facts can be ascertained 121
with reasonable certainty. We are no longer dependent only on 128
oral tradition, but can refer to contemporary documents. These
reflect in the main only the European side of Black-White relations, [175]
but even so their testimony is enlightening. I have therefore set out in full the history, mainly of external relations, of the Fort Jameson Ngoni from 1886 down to 1900 both with the intention of throwing light on how the transition was made from pre-conquest to modern society in this particular tribal instance, and also as an example of what seems probably an oft-repeated process in the history of any empire. A discussion of how typical the Ngoni experience is would take us beyond the bounds of this book. We should, however, bear in mind that the newer comparative method, as developed by Radcliffe-Brown and his followers, is as applicable to mammoth social forms, such as empires, as to small ones such as hordes, provided only that the right kind of data are available.

Our detailed documentation should extend down to modern times, but after 1900 there was a change in the kind of events that were documented, related as we shall see to a change in social relations, and we have to proceed somewhat differently.

[8] For the concept of scale, see Wilson, *Social change*, pp. 25*ff*.

231 Manning stipulated that cattle handed back to the Ngoni
439 should not be sold, to prevent traders bartering cattle for gun-
648 powder.[123] Nevertheless the majority of the cattle remaining in or
727 returned to Ngoni hands were sold within two years. In April 1898
over 14,000 head of cattle were counted.[124] Whether or not all
these were in Ngoni ownership at the time is not clear, although the
North Charterland implied in a letter written in 1899 that at least
12,000 belonged to Ngoni.[125] During the next year or so, in spite
of Administrative opposition, many thousands of cattle were sold
to traders or killed. By 31 March 1900 only 1,224 remained.[126]
[177] Thus another of the systems of social relationships, those mediated
through cattle, which had sustained the old social order, was
undermined.

8. *The end of a system*

Thus ended the Ngoni war and with it the Ngoni State. In the
178 last twelve years of its existence, from 1886 to 1898, three struggles
648 were proceeding simultaneously in linked regions of social space.
First there were the traditional processes already described by
which Ngoni killed and recruited their neighbours and by which
cleavages between segments of their residential system widened and
altered with time. Second there was the struggle between Portugal,
Great Britain and, peripherally, Germany for the political control
of south-central Africa. Third there was a struggle between
[439] different groups of financiers in London for the control of the rich
economic resources which they believed, quite mistakenly as far
as we can now tell, lay waiting to be discovered in Mpezeni's
country and round about. Apart from these three major fields of
activity, there were two others which affected this particular area
to a lesser degree. There were the traders and adventurers like
Wiese (until 1896), Matakenya and the Arabs who competed with
one another and endeavoured to exploit the region in terms of
ivory, gunpowder and slaves. There were also the various missions,
[797] representing the interests of their co-religionists and anti-slavery
enthusiasts in Europe, competing with each other and with the
slave traders for local control. There was even a scheme for
colonizing Mpezeni's country with Christian laymen from Britain.[127]
All these social fields were interwoven in reality, but in analysis

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[123] 207; 208, fo. 15; 233.

[124] *Reports on the Administration*, 1898-1900, p. 65.

[125] 230, p. 69. Duff, *Nyasaland*, p. 393, implies that all the 14,000 belonged to Ngoni.

[126] *Reports on the Administration*, 1898-1900, p. 65.

[127] 87.

1;Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

our task is to separate them out. Yet even in analysis we have to 178
show how each field interlocks with the other two, how events in 648
one field set up movements in others.

The material apparatus used in the various fields was distinct. The traditional processes were decided ultimately by resort to spears and shields. Portugal and Britain fought with artillery, embargoes, customs dues and treaties. The North Charterland 439
fought its rivals with concessions, certificates of claim and share 648
capital.[188] Mpezeni, who knew how to fight with spears, was asked to sign pieces of paper which would then be negotiable in a property system of which he knew nothing, and the manipulators of which knew little of him. The treaty-collectors imagined a patchwork of stationary chiefdoms spread over the region, each with a chief powerful enough to sell his country, whereas in fact there was only an unstable series of groups of shifting cultivators, each liable to attack from the migrating Ngoni.

Yet despite the differences in technique and despite the lack of knowledge of each other's systems of government, the various groups involved continued to pursue their own ends as best they could. Mpezeni may not have known what a flag was, yet the issue between Portugal and Britain was decided, and decided in Lisbon rather than in Ngoniland. The treaties may have been made beyond the competence, and the understanding, of the chiefs who signed them, and yet the B.S.A. Company did gain control of the country. Mpezeni never made his mark on a document, yet the North Charterland acquired its ten thousand square miles of land. On the other hand, the Ngoni regiments tried to win another battle [721]
like the others they had won before, and this time they failed. In [669]
consequence of the war of 1898 there was a revolution, a change of structural form, in Ngoni society, whereas in the histories of Portugal and Britain, and even of the B.S.A. Company, the event passed almost unnoticed.

In northern Nyasaland an analogous process of incorporation within a wider system was taking place. Here also there was an intruding European group and the same distant interest of the Nyasaland Administration. Yet in many ways the chain of events in northern Nyasaland was simpler than at Fort Jameson. In the [797]
north, there was only one set of resident Whites, the Livingstonia missionaries, there was no Wiese willing to play for both sides at once, and there was no North Charterland. In consequence the

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[188] cf. Kuper, *African Aristocracy*, p. 24: 'Swazi were subjugated through concessions, a type of economic warfare eventually sanctioned by powerful European governments.'

439 648 relationship between Ngoni and Europeans was of a somewhat different kind, and one of its most interesting features was an attempt by the Ngoni, persisted in for many years, to establish a monopoly over the missionaries, at the expense of another tribe with whom they were at war.[129] In Fort Jameson the social field was more complex. One of Mpezeni's sons tried to sell ivory to Wiese illegally without his father's knowledge,[130] and we may look on this as an attempt to establish a relationship with him differentiated from the wider relationship between Wiese and the Ngoni as a whole, or perhaps as an attempt on Wiese's part to penetrate Ngoni society along its lines of structural cleavage. His and Deare's support for a candidate for the heirship was similar in intention. [661] Mpezeni's efforts to gain support from Kotakota against his people was a more noticeable attempt to utilize the power of the Whites in his own sectional interest. Similarly the readiness with which raided chiefs made treaties was certainly related to their weak position in relation to the Ngoni and their hope of support against them. Even with the traders, as distinct from the treaty-collectors, this consideration was relevant. Deare relates how he asked Mpezeni to prevent raiding near the North Charterland supply route which passed through Undi's country. When later he visited Undi, he was welcomed for stopping the raids and was given ivory. Thus although at Fort Jameson no one group had a monopoly of access to the Europeans, there were these attempts to establish specific relations with them to the advantage of the different groups concerned.

For as soon as two groups are brought into contact, and for [178] some reason neither group annihilates the other, there is a change in the structure of the social field in which they act. Life can no longer go on as before, for every man has new potential allies and new potential enemies. There is no established order to which appeal can be made, for a new order has to be created. A new set of alignments, a new social structure, emerges from the manoeuvring and intriguing of the transition period which must differ from the old because of the new interests and new relationships which it contains.

Thus Europeans discriminated between one African group and another. Similarly the Ngoni established different relations with different European groups. From the beginning it was clear that the Portuguese and the British were to be distinguished, and Mpezeni preferred the inaction of the former to the efficiency of

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[129] cf. Elmslie, *Wild Ngoni*, pp. 97, 129, 237 and 245.
[130] Wiese, 'Expedição', x, pp. 491-2.

439 Mcekwani mpanza (Chequani), a lieutenant of segment 10.
578 Among the enemies are Ngoka Lukhezo zulu (Goka), a lieutenant
648 of segment 4, and Kamzembe maiemesa (Camsembe), regional
668 governor in segment 10.[132] The elucidation of this cleavage is
further complicated by the fact that from 1889 until 1898 Mpezeni
lived at least most of the time not with his great wife but with his
favourite, the leader of the subsidiary bevy in segment 15.[133] He
may have done this to place himself at a distance from Wiese, who
had a store at the headquarters of segment 4, Mpezeni's father's
great wife's village, and from the North Charterland, whose Fort
Young was just outside the headquarters of segment 10, his own
great wife's village. There is, however, no definite evidence for this.

Regarding the Europeans for the moment as external agents,
we can see how inter-African relations were affected by them.
Within the chiefdom the most striking phenomenon was the pro-
hibition on raiding imposed by the Whites. It was this which
appears to have accentuated the cleavage between Mpezeni and
his sons and which may have given Nsingu an external object of
attack formidable enough to unite him with his brothers. The
Ngoni State was essentially a military one and each successive
generation of leaders needed to glorify themselves in battle.
Mpezeni at the end of his life, his battles over, could well favour
[721] peace but his sons had still to demonstrate their valour and swell
their segments with captives. The prohibition on raiding struck at
[178] at the root of the State, socially as well as economically. External
relations changed their content, and neighbouring chiefs were able
to visit Ngoniland unmolested. A more significant change of
relation was attempted when Chabisa tried to unite the Fort
Jameson and northern Nyasaland groups of Ngoni against the
Europeans. Chabisa failed, but even so Ngoni re-established con-
tact with the Ndebele after a lapse of some sixty-five years as the
direct result of European action.

In all this the Arabs played only a minor part. Some Arabs
439 traded with Mpezeni for slaves, and Ngoni used sometimes to raid
648 Arab caravans. This we know from Deare, who saw an Arab with
567 Mpezeni and to whom Nsingu related the story of a successful
attack on a caravan. Deare mentions that this Arab tried to
influence Mpezeni against him.[134] Apart from this, there is little
information on their dealings with this group of Ngoni. The main
struggle between Administration and Arabs was fought out at

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[132] 187, fo. 137. cf. Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 20.

[133] Angus, 'Northern Angoniland', p. 79.

[134] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 27 April and 4 May.

439 law and order. In this, not only the Ngoni were concerned. There
464 was a shortage of labour in Nyasaland and Mpezeni's raids pre-
648 vented labourers reaching that country from the interior. The
campaign against Mwase in 1895 was undertaken partly with the
aim of opening up labour routes and Mpezeni's defeat carried this
a stage further. The Collector at Kotakota wrote shortly after the
war: 'It is quite safe to say that no greater assistance has been given
to these districts (and in fact to the Protectorate) than this opening
up of the Luapula Valley by the conquest of Mpezeni.'[128] Yet the
Luapula is 350 miles from Fort Jameson. Even Ngoni technical
skill in fighting was of value to the new conquerors, for within six
[167] months of the war Ngoni fighting men were in Southern Rhodesia,
not as allies of the Ndebele but as part of the British South Africa
Police. Within ten months, the headquarters of segment 13 had
been moved to make way for the new Administrative capital.
With the defeat of Mpezeni, North-Eastern Rhodesia became a
country.

A final point requires explication. Granted that the Ngoni
178 social system had to change in this new complex social environment,
361 and granted also that their activities, in particular raiding, had to
648 be adapted to new demands on their labour, why did not the Ngoni
continue to live in large villages as they had done hitherto? There
are numerous analogies in Africa where segmentary social systems
have been fitted into an Administrative framework, and where
raiding has given way to migrant labour, and yet the pattern of
settlement has remained the same. Why did the big Ngoni villages
disappear after 1898?

Part of the answer to this question can be stated in ecological terms. In pre-conquest times, the dense population, human and bovine, the great stretches of cultivated land, and the manifest prosperity of the people impressed themselves vividly on contemporary observers accustomed to the scattered settlements of the surrounding tribes. Angus writes:

> 'Before us lay an undulating valley some miles in breadth, which, as the heavily timbered hills on either side proclaimed, had once been covered with forest, but was now denuded of every vestige of a tree. Village after village surrounded by waving cornfields, and green plains dotted with herds of cattle, stretched away into the distance. Never before in any of my African wanderings had I seen such an extent of land under cultivation; the cornfields seemed unending, and the size and number of the

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[128] *B.C.A.G.*, v, 6 (30 April 1898), p. 4.

villages fairly astonished me; and it was not till then that I 178
realized what a powerful and prosperous people were those whose 361
acquaintance I was about to make.'[137] 648

We may compare this description of conditions in 1896 with that given by Trapnell for the same area in 1938.

> '. . . Reserve II presents an example of combined cutting-
> out, soil-deterioration and erosion which probably has no equal [34]
> in the Territory. . . . Cattle are most numerous in this reserve, [311]
> and . . . their added burden on the land has doubtless helped to
> weigh the scales to the point of erosion. With cattle and an [231]
> excessive population in Mpezeni's and Maguya's country, surface compaction and deterioration of soil have come to give place to wholesale wash, and denuded belts of resting land are now to be seen seared by dongas fully ten feet deep. The enormous gullied scars down the face of Nyamfinsi and neighbouring hills provide notable examples of the effects of millet cultivation on impossible slopes.'[138]

The devastation described by Trapnell has come about in part
on account of the alienation of land to Whites, but it is also due to the
transition which the Ngoni have been forced to make from living as [241]
migrant brigands to working as subsistence cultivators and migrant
labourers. Even without alienation, it is likely that the large [177]
villages would have disappeared.

The population of the tribe immediately prior to the conquest 161
was estimated by Deare to be 40,000 and possibly more. Johnston,
in his highly ambitious population density map, appears to have
assumed a population of about 50,000, while an official estimate in
1898 was nearly 150,000.[139] The area of Mpezeni's country was
estimated by Angus to be about 400 square miles. He also delimits [131]
an area of about 2,700 square miles which he describes as 'Angoniland proper', but it is clear that this large area includes much
waterless uninhabited country. Johnston implies, on his map, an
inhabited area of 3,200 square miles, but again there is clear evidence [311]
that in fact much of this was uninhabited. In 1903 it was estimated
that the area within which the Ngoni kept their cattle before the
conquest was about 600 square miles.[140] Angus's lower estimate
is in accord with the distances between villages given by travellers

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[137] Angus, 'Northern Angoniland', p. 78.

[138] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 67, 71.

[139] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 11 May; *A & P*, 1894, lvii, p. 769; *B.C.A.G.*, v, 3 (26 February 1898), p. 1.

[140] Angus, 'Northern Angoliland', pp. 74, 78; *B.C.A.G.*, iii, 11 (1 June 1896), p. 1; *Reports on the Administration*, 1903, p. 19.

161 such as Sharpe, Thomson and Deare, and with my own information based on village histories. Combining this with the lowest estimate of population, we arrive at a population density of 100 persons to the square mile, while the highest estimate implies a density of 375. Highly unreliable as these figures are, it is clear that the density of population was considerably greater before the conquest than it is now, when it averages about 68 persons to the square mile. Even the present-day figure is nearly three times the density which the land can sustain in perpetuity.

This dense population was concentrated in large villages.
361 Angus estimated that there were at least a thousand huts in Loan-
162 geni, while Deare estimated that there were sixteen hundred.
Read states that it was over three miles across, while Genthe says that Ngoni villages were about five times the size of the average Cewa village. From the top of a mountain, Deare saw eleven villages all about the same size as Loangeni.[141] Thus it seems that there were several villages with populations of the order of three thousand. If Deare and Johnston are right in their estimates of tribal population the majority of the people lived in these big villages.

Yet by September 1898 the only villages left in Mpezeni's country were a few to the east of Fort Young. All the rest had been destroyed by troops, and their former inhabitants were said to be 'still timid' and living in scattered groups in grass shelters.[142] The large pre-conquest settlements were particularly vulnerable to attack by troops armed with guns and intent on burning, the more so because there were no defensive preparations at all. Glave wrote in 1894 that the Ngoni 'have no stockaded village, such protection they deem unnecessary as no enemy can be strong enough to attack them'.[143]

The large villages and the high density of population were appropriate only to a victorious military society, relying for at least part of its subsistence on raided crops and beasts produced outside its borders and for the rest on the maximum exploitation of the land
[727] inside them. When its enemies had been plundered and its own
[167] lands exhausted, it moved on. We can infer from Angus and from
Sharpe, who wrote of 'entirely open' country,[144] that within the
178 settled area most of the cultivable land was in use at the same time.
311 Yet in many parts of the Fort Jameson area the soil is now exhausted
after five years under maize and must be left for twenty-five years

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[141] Angus, 'Northern Angoniland', p. 78; Deare, 'Slave raiders', 27 April and 11 May; Read, 'Tradition', p. 475, f.n. 2; Genthe, 'Mpezeni's', p. 1.

[142] Selby, memorandum dated 10 March 1901.

[143] 86, fo. 329.

[144] Sharpe, 'Lake Nyasa', p. 745. For Angus, see pp. 102*f*.

to recover under bush fallow. The long-term carrying capacity of 178
the land before the conquest cannot have been much greater than 311
its present average value of 25 persons to the square mile.[145] Thus [161]
it is certain that in pre-conquest times the Ngoni were settled at a
density even more in excess of the critical value than it is now,
despite alienation. There cannot have been much cultivable land
in reserve and the State was exhausting the wealth of its own soil
as well as drawing on the resources of its neighbours. Thus even
if the large villages had not been burnt, the same number of people
could not for long have continued to live in them practising subsistence
agriculture. A reduction in the density of population necessarily 161
involved under this economy a reduction in the size of
villages, for Ngoni do not like to live more than an hour's walk 167
from their gardens. As it was, the villages were burnt, many Ngoni 178
of Cewa origin left Ngoniland, and much of the more densely
settled land, carrying up to 140 persons to the square mile, was
alienated to Europeans within six years of the war.[146] The arrangement
of persons over the land and the activities they carried on
were both dramatically altered by the European conquest. It is,
therefore, not surprising that the old society was so drastically
changed at the same time. What is perhaps surprising is the extent
to which, as we shall see, the forms of grouping of the past have
influenced the forms of the new society.

In brief, the old political system was a system of segments, the 631
new one is a system of villages and counties. The county segment
links the two systems, but there is no function in the new order for 177
segments embracing several counties or for those that embrace only
part of a county. Within the village, the segmentary processes still
go on, but at this level of organization we are dealing with kinship
rather than politics. When a segment grows beyond the bounds of
a single village, it begins to fade away, and we are left with a network
of ties which link villages with one another but which do not
define mutually exclusive groups as existed in pre-conquest times.
The uncertainty about how counties should be divided internally
is an indication of the lack of function of these intermediate segments.
For some purposes, such as the organization of royal hunts, [224]
a county is divided into a number of rural districts. These are
geographically defined areas, and it is sometimes possible to say
that such-and-such a man, usually a senior lieutenant of the county
segment, is the most important person in such-and-such a rural
area. However, the recognizable rural districts in a county do not

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[145] Allan, *Land Usage*, pp. 16-17.

[146] *N.E.R.G.G.*, ii, 2 (15 March 1904), p. 34.

5. *Relative status of Chiefs*

178 631 634 648 There was nothing inherent in the residential system which facilitated the emergence of twelve, and only twelve, counties from Mpezeni's people. Each major segment already had a large number of lesser segments within it in 1898, and it was during the unsettled years that followed the conquest, when new schemes of organization were tried out, when fresh occupants were sought for existing posts, and when the spatial distribution of people was being radically altered, that these twelve gradually emerged. Considerations of size do not seem to have been very important, for there is a wide variation in the size of counties. However, with the development of the Native Authority and Native Court, there is an upper limit to [692] the size of the county which can be served adequately by a single court and possibly by a single minor chief, and this shows itself in the moves towards forming sub-counties within one or two of the larger ones. Yet in view of administrative attempts to do away with certain chiefs, it seems that in its eyes the Ngoni have too many rather than too few chiefs. The order of segmentation is not critical, as we have seen. Nor has there been merely an ossification of the formal structure as it was at the moment of conquest, as is often the case when a fluid society is suddenly put into a rigid mould. Wiese in 1891 wrote that Ngoniland was divided into four districts.[30] In our terms, these were as follows:

(*a*) Primal segment 11.
(*b*) Primal segment 14.
(*c*) Residual segment 10 after 14 was formed.
(*d*) Residual segment 4 after 10 and 11 were formed.

Of these four districts, the first has given rise to two counties, 11 and 16; the second to two, 14 and 17; the third to three, 10, 13 and 15; and the fourth to three, 4, 9 and 12. Wiese does not indicate in what districts he would place segments 5 and 6.

The fortuitous manner in which the counties have emerged is illustrated by the fact that for certain purposes one of the counties is treated as if it were two. At one time, when there were more administrative divisions than there are now, it was divided into two [651] areas, and this arrangement still persists for tax collection. Other counties have only one tax register book each, but this one has two.

In genealogical terms also, the emergence of the twelve chiefs appears to have been fortuitous. For example, the second wife of [643] Mpezeni I in segment 10, after the formation of segments 14 and 15,

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[30] Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 469-70.

had one son who died unmarried. The heir of Mpezeni I next after 648 178
Nsingu was, therefore, the eldest son of the third wife in segment 10. 631
This man's position in segment 10 was, therefore, equivalent to 634
that of the eldest son of the second wife in segment 14, who was the [643]
second heir in that segment. Of these two second heirs, the latter,
in the less important segment, was able to establish himself as the
chief of county 17 whereas the former, in the more important segment, [557]
succeeded merely in becoming a village headman. Similarly,
some lieutenants managed to become chiefs, others of comparable
status did not. Wiese mentions six lieutenants by name. One of
these became a chief, the other five did not. The segments of two
other lieutenants, not mentioned by Wiese, became county segments
and one other lieutenant became chief in the county of his lady's
segment.

The evidence, therefore, suggests that we must look upon this 178
transition from one system to another as no simple procedure by
which indigenous forms of organization are taken over largely 648
unchanged by a colonial administration. The change from an 557
isolated expanding system based on warfare to a large-scale quasi-static system based on subsistence production and migratory labour
provided opportunities for advancement for those who could adapt
themselves more quickly than their neighbours. In one sense the
really significant change came not in 1898 but in the 1920s, when
the pattern of alignment became fixed. In the intervening period
Ngoni society was still fluid, and an ambitious man had hope of
securing advancement even as he had in the old days before the
conquest, even though that advancement was achieved by different
means and in a different context. It was after the twelve counties
had been fixed, when it became clear that no more chiefs were to [634]
be made, that social mobility declined. With a rapidly changing
external environment it was unlikely that this static condition
would last, and with the growth of the Native Authority bureaucracy
a new opening presented itself. Recently there are indications
that further openings for the ambitious are being provided in the [632]
formation of parishes and in other schemes of rural development.
But there are no new chiefs, even as there are no new plumed
warriors for them to lead in battle or on whose behalf they can [554]
intercede with the tribal ancestors. Leadership in a society of half-peasants,
half-proletarians, is based on other interests.

The salaries of chiefs are determined at an annual budget 465
meeting held by the District Officer and attended by the chiefs and 634
a few other men. The general outline of the tribal budget is
suggested by the Administration, but on items of interest, such as 648

paid more than 17, as befits the fact that segment 14 contains 634
segment 17, and similarly 11 is paid more than 16. 648

From another point of view we see that the sizes of the counties, [465]
in terms of the number of villages, are in accord with the segmentary
alignment, although here we have to remember that we are dealing 634
not with the county segments, residual or primal, but with the 648
counties themselves, each containing villages from many segments. 554
Yet despite this complication, it remains true that the status of a chief, as measured by the number of villages he controls, is in conformity with his position in the segmentary residential system. It may well be that during the early administrative period fortune favoured those leaders whose *de facto* following was in agreement with their position in the old political system. The use of hereditary
names emphasizes the connexion of the minor chiefs of to-day [551]
with the pre-conquest State and to some extent reflects their traditional alignment. Apart from county 16, where the hereditary name changed when a chief was succeeded by his brother, all the hereditary names refer to the first holders of the chieftainship, though not necessarily to the first leader of the county segment. Thus, for example, segment 5 was founded by Lomapela, brother of Zwangendaba. When the British Administration began, segment 5 was led by Zulu, a son's son of Lomapela. Zulu was recognized as a chief by the Administration, and the name Zulu has been adopted by the two chiefs, his sons, who have succeeded in turn. Similarly, segment 15 was founded for the lady Kukuya Kupili twala, a wife of Ntutu Mpezeni I. Her eldest son, Sayili, was recognized by the Administration as a chief, and this name has been inherited by his son and son's son who have succeeded him as county chief.

We should not infer from the conformity between the position of chiefs in modern and traditional terms that the present system is maintained solely by values surviving from before the conquest. This is plainly not the case. Our point here is that in this particular respect traditional values do not clash with those of the new order.

6. *Counties as territorial units*

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We have seen that during the period of migration there were no 631
lasting boundaries, and that political allegiance outlasted changes 634
in geographical location. This state of affairs continued for some [167]
time after the conquest. The moves that were made were much shorter than in previous times, but the same principle applied. From 1900 to 1930 many villages moved from one site to another as land was alienated to Whites, as the boundaries of proposed

631 reserves were amended, and as existing gardens were exhausted.
634 Movement of this kind did not greatly affect political allegiance, so
● 178 that not all the villages acknowledging the control of a minor chief
were built in his vicinity. Coxhead mentions seven defined
territorial units in 1914, but by the time I began fieldwork in 1946
their boundaries had been forgotten.[21] Most of the villages in any
one county were clustered together, with the capital village and the
chief's village somewhere in the middle of the cluster, but there
were also more distant villages situated among those belonging to
other counties. The next stage of development appears to have
been the definition of county boundaries, so that by 1946 it was
possible to speak of some villages as situated in one county and
owing allegiance to another. Most of these interloping villages, as
we may call them, belonged to the segment of the county to which
they owed allegiance. They were a bone of contention between
chiefs, for although each chief desires as many villages as possible
[311] under his control, he has only a limited amount of land in his county
with which to satisfy his people. An analogous situation is found
in some Welsh sheep farms, where each farmer likes to own as many
sheep as possible but hopes they will graze on someone else's land.
The chief in political control of an interloping village endeavoured
to maintain his control at a distance and at the same time to make
use of the land in the local chief's county, while the latter had
to decide between trying to make the interloping village shift its
allegiance so as to increase his own following and trying to get it to
move away so as to give his people more land. In 1947 and 1948,
[648] to avoid such difficulties between chiefs, the Administration defined
county boundaries precisely and insisted that all villages within the
area of a county should be under the control of the county chief.

Thus, in the development of the county as a social group, ties
631 of segmentary affiliation have been gradually replaced by those of
634 territorial propinquity. This replacement is not yet complete, nor
648 has it arisen merely as a consequence of Administrative action in
178 the last few years. Village histories show that in many instances a
village changed from attachment to the head of its major segment
to attachment to the local county chief many years ago and without
prompting from the Administration. Villagers marry their neighbours
[582] irrespective of county affiliation and thus build up ties which
link them to the local county. It may be inconvenient to walk a
long way to the court and county meetings of a distant chief,
particularly if the local chief appears to listen more readily to his
people's complaints and advice.

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[21] Coxhead, *Native Tribes*, pp. 22, 24.

7. *Villages*

Throughout Ngoni history the village has been an easily 621
recognizable residential unit. Many of the pre-conquest villages,
particularly those which were headquarters of major segments,
were large clusters of huts with thousands of inhabitants. Although
there are none of comparable size to-day, the concept of the village
remains. The bulk of the present Ngoni rural population live in
discrete clusters of huts housing between fifty and two hundred
people. These we call villages. Each village is spatially distinct [361]
from the next, and generally is surrounded by garden land and bush.

The post of headman of a single village has never been very 622
important in the scheme of administration. Under the 1903 scheme,
district headmen were appointed in charge of groups of villages. 648
After 1916 this term was dropped in favour of minor chief, sub-
chief or headman of a group of villages. The men referred to by [634]
these names were the people who became county chiefs. Below
them no individuals were appointed as leaders of social groups.
From at least 1904 onwards there were men called district messengers 624
who carried ornamental spears as badges of office and who carried
out the instructions of the Native Commissioner. They had the 202
functions of policemen and messengers, although some of them [625]
were heads of villages in their own right. In 1916, the title of these
men was changed to divisional headmen, and they were described
as being heads of groups of villages. Nevertheless, at least among
the Ngoni, most divisional headmen continued to act merely as
messengers and police, and leadership of groups of villages continued to rest with the variously styled minor chiefs. After 1929
the work of divisional headmen was taken over partly by the
Native Authority messengers and partly by land messengers, who
are Government (Boma) messengers sent to live rurally from time
to time.

Yet although the office of village headman has not been of 621
Administrative significance, the village has always been an impor- 648
tant social group. We have seen that even in pre-conquest times,
when the State as a whole was much more concentrated spatially 178
than it is now, the fact of common residence was of significance
within the segmentary residential system. The village had a
central cattle byre. Its headman was known by a special term and [622]
once a primal segment had grown to village size the segment name
was not applied to any residual segment within the headquarters
village. The policy of the Administration, combined with a change
in kinship relations among the tribe (a change from the quasi- [601]

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621 agnation of the small segments to what I have termed an omni-
648 directional system), has increased the importance of the single
[601] village. After 1898 the Administration endeavoured to bring the people back into villages of moderate size which could be easily supervised by the Administration acting through chiefs.[22] In 1912 a comprehensive scheme of Native reserves was proposed. To facilitate the introduction of the scheme, many small villages were amalgamated with others near by to form units of forty huts or more. The larger groups of composite villages were to form the nuclei of the reserves.[23] After 1930, when villages began to spread out again, many of the enforced amalgamations came to an end. The Administrative rules that every man must live in a recognized village and that a village with less than ten tax-paying men could not be recognized were not always enforced, although they were not repealed until 1945. Administrative recognition has been an important consideration in determining the size of villages but it has not been the only one.

621 In the residential system, the process of segmentation did not
681 stop with the founding of the segments we now know as county
178 segments. Already in 1898 there were very many more segments in being than the few we have shown in Diagram 1. There we have indicated the position of the major branches of the tree of State but have omitted the hundreds of minor limbs and thousands of twigs which made up the whole. Even if we restrict our attention to segments founded before 1898 we find within any county segment to-day many smaller groups, some of them divisions, others single villages, and a few containing several villages, which are in fact inferior segments formed by one or other of the processes we discussed in Chapter I. Lieutenants and others have made their own segments, junior sons have left their natal villages, and so on. The processes of segment formation since 1898 have not been identical with those prevailing before the conquest, for the quasi-agnatic structure of segments has been modified and segments of recent formation, if in fact we can legitimately call them segments at all, are not organized in the same hierarchical manner as in the old residential system. We shall discuss the formation of small social groups in a later part of our study, the analysis of village life.
178 Here, at the county level, we have to deal with what is essentially a
634 continuation of a pre-conquest process. Each successive head of a
622 county segment, i.e. each county chief, has formed his own new segment within that of his predecessor. Thus, for instance, where

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[22] *Reports on the Administration*, 1902, p. 2, and 1903, p. 2.

[23] *M.R.A.*, p. 108.

the reigning chief is the grandson of the founder of the county segment, 178
there is one minor segment founded by his father within which 634
he has founded his own segment. In counties where there have been 622
more than three successive heads of the segment, there will be more
than one segment intervening between the county segment and
that of the reigning chief. With the decline in polygyny, most
chiefs have had only one bevy of wives or even a single wife, so [595]
that they have been each able to found only one segment. It will
be convenient to speak of 'chief's segment' for a segment founded [611]
by a reigning chief, and of 'regal segment' for a segment founded
by a former chief. With this nomenclature, each chief's segment
becomes regal on the death of its founder.

This terminology links up with our use of the terms *regal* and 631
chief's villages, as I have defined them elsewhere.[24] The headquarters 622
of a regal segment is a regal village, and the headquarters 643
of a chief's segment is a chief's village. Similarly the headquarters
of a county segment is a capital village.

In general we may refer to capital, regal and chief's villages
collectively as royal villages, for they represent the chieftainship,
and the history of the State, as against the diverse particular interests
represented by the villages led by commoners. Four minor chiefs
are, however, not agnatic descendants of Zwangendaba, and we
can call their segments and villages royal only with qualification.
Two of these four chiefs use the royal descent-name, and they all [611]
generally ally themselves with their royal colleagues. Yet there are
many Ngoni in these pseudo-royal counties, particularly true
agnatic descendants of Zwangendaba or of regional governors, who
are scornful of the royal pretensions of their county chiefs. [578]

Some of the junior kinsmen of Zwangendaba became leaders of independent Ngoni groups. None of the junior sons of Mpezeni I became independent leaders but some of them or their descendants did become county chiefs. None of the junior sons of Nsingu or Mpezeni II became chiefs and under the present system none of them is likely to do so. Nevertheless they founded segments, and this has happened in every junior line. In each county, as well as the county, regal and chief's segments, whose founders have been on the direct line of succession to the chieftainship, there are also segments founded by junior members of the chiefly house. These we shall term *cadet segments* and the headquarters of a cadet segment a *cadet village*.

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[24] Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 204-6. In an earlier publication, 'Political development', p. 106, I used the adjective *private* in place of *regal* and *chief's*.

the same processes we have seen at work in the formation of segments. 628
Those villages are linked which have a common origin, 621
and the mechanism of dispersal is still the same as in pre-conquest
times. Sons of a headman still break out of their natal village and
lieutenants and others move off to make their own villages. However, [178]
with the decline in polygyny, fewer new villages arise from [595]
the formation of new bands of wives by a headman.

Secondly, the village has become more important than before, 621
and village membership is now critical in a wide variety of situations.
Thirdly, because it has become easier to move from one village to 178
another than to form a new village, the genealogical structure of
the village has become highly diversified as compared with segments
of similar size in the old system.

Thus, the transition has been from a State based on a continuously 178
segmenting political system to a minor unit of administration
in a modern State. The new order has grown out of the old, 64
not as the result of any professed policy of preserving indigenous forms of political organization, but because the aims of the Administration were essentially conservative, because it was concerned with preserving order in the country as cheaply as possible and did not wish to introduce economic and political changes which would conflict with the supply of labour to other areas scheduled for earlier development; and because for the most part those individuals who occupied powerful positions in the old régime were best able to survive in the struggle for power which determined the eventual form of the new. Therefore, although their entry into the colonial empire was so much more abrupt than that of their matrilineal neighbours, the political system to which Ngoni are now subject bears many more superficial similarities to its former condition than is the case among the Cewa and others. The changes have been great, as we have seen, but the symbols and names remain, with changed significance, to remind Ngoni of their past.

for a few heaps of stones hidden among the trees on the tops of 571
hills. People visit back and forth freely, except for the control 574
imposed at the customs barrier on the one lorry road. Many
people grow vegetables in Nyasaland, where there is more land, [439]
and sell them in Northern Rhodesia, where there is a better market. [311]

While this territorial proximity gives rise to a multitude of ties
linking individuals across the border, it does not lead to new
political relations between the counties with a common boundary.
Such political relations as do persist are survivals from the old order.
Although the formal structure of the Native Court system, as determined [692]
by the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia Administrations,
does not permit it, cases sometimes come on appeal from the Nyasaland 648
counties to Mpezeni. There is official visiting between chiefs 643
across the border, and when the Paramount Chief is short of food
he may ask the Nyasaland chiefs to send him a few baskets of maize.
But despite the nearness of the Nyasaland chiefs to Mpezeni in
spatial terms, their political interests lie mainly in the opposite
direction. They are the only two Ngoni chiefs in that district of
Nyasaland and most of the chiefs whom they meet are Cewa. Their
Administration is separate from that in Northern Rhodesia, their
laws are different, and they look towards Zomba rather than
Lusaka as the seat of Administrative power. We have noted how
Mpezeni I contemplated moving into Nyasaland in 1897. As late
as 1922, when the Native Reserve scheme was under discussion,
Mpezeni II made some preliminary soundings on moving across
the border, but already by 1946 such projects were overshadowed by
the prospects of federation for the two countries of Northern
Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The people of the two Nyasaland counties are subject to the 611
same general influences as are their Northern Rhodesia neighbours 178
in such matters as increasing dependence on an exchange economy
and the development of a cognatic or omni-directional kinship 171
system in which links can be traced through spouses as well as
through fathers or mothers. Yet even in economic activity there are
significant differences. In Nyasaland, Africans grow tobacco for [249]
sale, while the Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia are not able to do so;
recruiting for the Rand gold-mines is allowed in Nyasaland and [464]
prohibited in most of Northern Rhodesia, including the Fort
Jameson area.

The annual meetings of the African Provincial Council of the 646
Eastern Province are attended by representatives from each tribe 648
in the province, two people from Fort Jameson township, the
Provincial Commissioner and sometimes a representative of the

guish them from their neighbours are no more significant than the 563
many varieties of custom and belief which are to be found in every 648
Ngoni village. They do not form a group among themselves, their
members participate in all communal activities in their counties and
are to be found at all levels of the Native Authority organization
below that of chief. They are linked by kinship to their neighbours. [602]
The two Nyasaland counties, however, include relatively large
areas where there are only Cewa-speaking villages, and many of
these claim that they have been placed under Ngoni rule only by
Administrative action. From time to time they have made efforts
to break away and to attach themselves to some neighbouring Cewa
chief or to establish a separate chiefdom. There appears to be a
sharp distinction between the Ngoni chiefs, with the villages in
their county segments, and their Cewa-speaking subjects. It will
be remembered that the two Nyasaland chiefdoms represent the
head of the eastern movement of Mpezeni's group, and that some
of the settlement across the border took place as late as 1897. It is
not surprising therefore that in these two counties assimilation of
Cewa captives and immigrants has not proceeded so far as in the
longer established counties in Northern Rhodesia.

11. *Conclusion*

In this study we have attempted to show what has happened 17
in Ngoni political life during a period of 130 years. To-day Ngoni
society is changing but this has not always been so. Prior to the
arrival of Wiese in 1886, the actually existing social relations were
changing, but the form of the social structure remained the same.
Each new segment developed along lines that were already known
and each time the State split, the new States were copies of the old. [631]
A system of this kind could not have lasted for long, for the supply [647]
of new recruits to the Ngoni States must have sooner or later been
exhausted. In Africa, even if the overall conditions facilitated the
emergence of this kind of migratory militarism, they were particularly unfavourable for its prolonged continuation. The Arabs
and the European Powers behind them were closing in on the centre
of Africa, and Ngoni days were numbered. Then came the defeat
of the Ngoni in 1898 and the emergence of a new system, in which
some of the actually existing political groups, and the relations
between them, appear to have a much greater stability than before.
But at the same time society as a whole has become much more 631
diversified, the spatial distribution of men and women in significant
relationship with one another has become highly complicated, and 178

178 631 new external factors are operating. There has been a change in the scale of social relationships, and Ngoni men and women form part of a large-scale society in which events in one distant part of the system affect events in another part. The history and analysis of this change lies largely outside the scope of this study, and we have restricted ourselves to the way in which the political system of the tribe has adapted itself and been adapted in the changing society. [64] The Ngoni sovereign State has become more and more like a rural district council in a backward area; foreign policy has given place to Native policy; [557] social mobility has been restricted to the lowest caste in a plural society; and the great warrior chief has become in effect the only member of the Administration who never goes home to Britain on leave. [643] But in the eyes of his people, the Paramount Chief still belongs to the Ngoni, and not to the Administration.

647 in the political organization. Some of these officials were also members of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, but many were not. The officials served the Paramount in his court and his administration, and also the chiefs, and formed the lines of communication between them. This 647 created a network of relationships between the Paramount and the 631 chiefs at the top level, and between the chiefs and the village headmen under them at the lower level. From this network were excluded, in the northern kingdom, all the *alumuzana* and, in the central kingdom, all those *alumuzana* who were not chiefs. In the two kingdoms the *alumuzana* exercised unofficial control over a varying number of villages, and were inclined to assert their social superiority because they were excluded from official recognition.

The foundations of the political structure within which the ruling 571 aristocracy operated were a series of related institutions which will be 171 described and analysed later in the book, but which must be referred to 178 here, partly in order to explain the terminology used. The South-eastern Bantu, whose culture the Ngoni brought with them, had an institution in all important villages known as 'houses', which was a grouping of huts and of the wives owning them round the hut of one or more of the leading women. This institution, with its variations among the southern and northern Nguni people, was described by Mrs. Hoernlé in the chapter on 'Social Organization' in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*.[1] The Ngoni institution of houses had developed from the basic pattern among the South-eastern Bantu into an independent form. In the first place it was only found in relation to the Paramount, the chiefs and leading men of the royal clan, and the *alumuzana*. It did not, as in South Africa, form the basic pattern of all [621] villages in the Ngoni kingdoms. Where, as in most villages owned by *alumuzana*, mixed ethnic groups lived together, the house system existed only for the head of the clan, his brothers and his successor. It was specifically an Ngoni institution in the cultural and social sense. In the second place, the terms 'right-hand' and 'left-hand' house, common among the South-eastern Bantu, were not used by the Ngoni in the 1930's. The two terms they used were the 'big house' and the '*gogo* house', and I propose to use these terms here. The principle behind the use of these terms was that the big house was the one from which the heir should come to succeed the Paramount, the chief, or the *mulumuzana*. The *gogo* house was the one which was responsible for maintaining tradition and performing ritual.

Another institution, closely related to that of the houses, was the 621 *lurungulu* and *gogo* villages. The Paramounts, the chiefs, and the leading 571 *alumuzana*, when they succeeded their father after his death, moved out of his village and made their own new village, or took their households

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[1] Schapera, I. (ed.). *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*. Routledge, 1937, chap. IV.

In the 1930's, in the villages of the *alumuzana*, individuals with the 596
same clan name formed patrilineal groups of an extended family type.
The original *alumuzana* were the leaders of groups of persons bearing 614
their clan descent name, who crossed the Zambesi under Zwangendaba
or Mputa. In Part II we shall see how these *alumuzana* were settled in 628
the Ngoni kingdoms round the royal villages, with the result that a group of villages of mixed ethnic origin came to be associated with the village regarded as the head village of a clan. Reference is made from time to time in this study to clan heads, and to the head villages of certain clans. There was no head of a Swazi or trans-Zambesi clan who was not regarded as a *mulumuzana*. On the ground that his ancestor crossed the Zambesi with his wives and followers, the head of such a clan was always given that title. In addition to the head village of a *mulumuzana* there were a number of other villages connected with the clan, created partly by the working of the *lusungulu* system of village segmentation, and partly by other sections of the larger villages moving off to make new gardens. The association of a number of villages owned by individuals with the same descent name was due to the original settlement of the *alumuzana* who were given land at varying distances from the royal village. When the Ngoni spoke of 'clan areas' this was the connotation they gave to the term. Village censuses showed that small family groups bearing the same descent name were scattered widely over a number of villages in several of the chiefs' areas. There was, however, in connexion with each clan an area of concentration round the head village where a number of families and individuals with that descent name were living. These were sometimes referred to as clan areas, using the name of the clan with the prefix *ma*, meaning the people of that clan, in central Ngoniland, and with the prefix *u*, meaning the land of the clan, in the northern kingdom.

(*c*) *The ritual pattern*

In the rest of this study there will be descriptions and analyses of 183
Ngoni marriage and funeral rites, of the puberty rites carried out for 171
each boy and girl, but not in groups in initiation schools, and of the
rituals associated with the ownership of cattle and with the ancestor cult. 178
The marriage and funeral rites have South-eastern Bantu affinities, and so has the ritual associated with cattle-keeping and the ancestor cult. The northern Ngoni had a tradition that circumcision was practised among them when they left Natal, and that it was given up while they were in Tanganyika. Giving the head-ring (*cidlodlo*) to the men who were allowed to leave the regiments and settle as married men in civilian life was another ritual of southern origin which the Ngoni gave up soon after the kingdoms were established in Nyasaland.[1] The

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[1] The early Europeans in Nyasaland reported that head-rings were worn by all the senior Ngoni men.

The
183 national ritual of the first-fruits ceremony (*incwala*), which brought all
178 the people to the royal village, was also abandoned before the Ngoni
kingdoms were finally established, for no old person alive in the 1930's
had seen the *incwala* ceremony.

(*d*) *The ceremonial pattern*

533 Ngoni songs and dances were performed without the accompaniment
535 of drums and the words of the songs sung in the 1930's were in the
Ngoni language. The war-dance, *ligubo*, was still danced at the royal
village and at the funerals of Paramounts and Royal Sisters. The *ngoma*
dance, performed after the harvest by young men and girls, was encour-
aged by the two Ngoni Paramounts, who endeavoured to prohibit other
dances which were not of Ngoni origin.

292 Ceremonial dress, especially the war-dress of the men, was well pre-
served by heads of clans in the 1930's in the central Ngoni kingdom. In
301 both kingdoms the Ngoni leading women wore their traditional bead
ornaments on the head and neck and arms, and tied their cloths on
festive occasions in the way in which their ancestors wore the long
lengths of soft dressed leather.

Only in Ngoni families were to be found the making of milk curds
262 (*amasi*), the cooked blood (*ulubende*), and the stamped maize (*izinkobe*),
all of which were traditional foods brought by them from the south.

(*e*) *The linguistic pattern*

197 In the 1930's the Ngoni language had almost disappeared as a home
language, except in Chief Mperembe's area in the northern kingdom.
The majority of the older men could still speak and understand Ngoni,
and nearly all the men who had been away to work in Southern Rhodesia
or the Transvaal had renewed their knowledge of Ngoni or learnt to
understand it from working with men who spoke Ndebele, Zulu or
126 Swazi. The texts in this book from the northern kingdom were given in
the Ngoni language and translated for me by Y. M. Cibambo. His own
texts were written for me in English. The texts from the central kingdom
192 were given in Nyanja and translated by me. The vernacular terms used
197 in this book illustrate the continued use of Ngoni terms for traditional
offices and objects, though in the central kingdom many of these were
being replaced by Nyanja terms. Words of traditional songs, some ritual
formulae, some forms of address, some titles of senior persons or groups
—all these were in Ngoni. The younger generation, however, especially
if they had not been south and heard Zulu or Ndebele, were not able to
[194] make any of the clicks, or to pronounce such double consonants as *dl*
and *hl*.

576 The Ngoni were punctilious about etiquette, and especially about the
linguistic terms required by good manners for greeting persons of
different rank and seniority, thanking for gifts or for an audience, taking

171 The distinctiveness of Ngoni institutions, so often emphasized by the
older men and by the early travellers in Nyasaland, was due to cultural
affinities with the South-eastern Bantu. The attached table sets out
those social and cultural elements in the Ngoni kingdoms which were
most distinct from parallel features among the neighbouring peoples,
and which had obvious affinity with South-eastern Bantu cultures. The
main Ngoni cultural elements have already been referred to in this
chapter and will be further discussed in the rest of this study. The corresponding
elements among the local peoples are based partly on the
[127 earlier sources quoted by Tew and partly on local informants and my
114] own observations. In collecting information about clans, the *mbumba*
group consisting of a man with his sisters' children, and the girls' initiation
schools, I had no direct contacts with any except Cewa sources.

Variations in cultural conformity among the Ngoni

● 178 In the Ngoni kingdoms among families with Swazi and trans-Zambesi
clan descent names there was considerable variation in the degree to
184 which they maintained Ngoni institutions and practised Ngoni cultural
forms. The anthropologist was constantly aware that the time element
was an important factor in the consolidation of Ngoni practices and in
the attitudes developed towards Ngoni culture among the individuals in
the different generations. The Ngoni in both kingdoms spoke of the
'older generations' (*mibadwo wa kale*), 'the middle generations' (*mibadwo
wa mpkati*), and 'the present generation' (*mibadwo wa tsopano*). The first
had grown to adulthood before the Europeans came, and were the older
senior men and women in the 1930's; the second had been affected by
[172] European missionaries, traders, and officials while they were young men
and women; the third had never known anything but European contacts
and many had grown up in European schools. The senior Ngoni of the
[181] older generation often expressed the sentiment: *zatha zonse tsopano*
(everything is finished now). They included in that saying the regrets of
the older Ngoni for their former independence, and their resentment at
the domination of European rule and European culture. It is idle to
177 speculate what cultural changes might have taken place in the Ngoni
178 kingdoms if European influence had been postponed another twenty to
thirty years. Nevertheless it is a vital factor in assessing Ngoni culture
that the kingdoms had barely twenty years of independent existence
before the Europeans began to penetrate Nyasaland. The older Ngoni
[181] looked back on their former independent existence as a golden age in
which they were spreading Ngoni customs and culture as well as exercising
political supremacy. It is difficult to believe that this was wholly
true, in view of the extensive cultural interchange going on in the
country as a whole. It is, however, possible that wider acceptance of
Ngoni cultural elements was prevented by the advent of the Europeans,
in so far as cultural institutions and political dominance were closely

associated. When warfare ceased the Ngoni could no longer force sub- 177
ject peoples to accept their rule and their cultural institutions, and they
had to acquiesce in considerable cultural heterogeneity within their 178
kingdoms, which, according to Ngoni informants, would not have been
allowed in pre-European days. The illustrations they gave were in terms
of the families living 'on the horns of the village', in many cases the
families of captives taken in war. Formerly, they said, those families
would have been made to marry with *lobola*, to have their ears pierced
in Ngoni fashion, to serve in the army, to be associated with one of the
house-groups and serve them in the huts or in the gardens. When Ngoni
political power declined, and when large villages broke up, some of these
groups formed their own villages and reverted to their former practices
of matrilineal descent and uxorilocal residence, and of girls' initiation
ceremonies.

In the northern kingdom one section of the peoples under Henga
leadership had adopted a patrilineal system before the Ngoni came.
The effect of the Ngoni conquest was to strengthen these practices in
this northern section, adding marriage by *lobola*, and to extend them to
the southern Tumbuka whose kinship and marriage practices were like
those of the Cewa who were their neighbours.[1] In the central kingdom,
patrilineal descent, marriage by *lobola* and virilocal residence were only
practised by families of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and they had
introduced variations in virilocal residence which will be discussed in
Chapter IV, Part III. Within the true Ngoni families in both kingdoms
the senior men and women in the 1930's were aware that cultural con-
formity with Ngoni practices was not as strict as it had been in their [184]
parents' days. They spoke of those Ngoni families who were non-con-
forming as 'people who spoil the land'.

On the other hand, the adoption of Ngoni customs by non-Ngoni in
the Ngoni kingdoms, that is by families with descent names from cis-
Zambesi and local clans, continued to take place after European rule
began. I found several instances of this adoption in the central kingdom,
and many of them were related to the acquisition of cattle by former
non-Ngoni families. It was chiefly the virilocal form of residence and
patrilineal descent which were taken over with *lobola* marriage. When
describing the adoption of such Ngoni practices, informants always said
it was *monga cingoni* (like the Ngoni). Those who belonged to the Ngoni
kingdoms and had largely adopted Ngoni culture expressed strong
sentiments of attachment to it; this was particularly true of town-
dwellers who had come from the Ngoni kingdoms but were not mem-
bers of Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans. Though they adopted many
external forms of European culture in dress, houses and food, the con- [186]
sciousness of their association with Ngoni culture and the Ngoni king-
doms was expressed in strongly emotional terms.

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[1] Tew, M. op. cit. pp. 107, 109.

CHAPTER I

THE MILITARY FOUNDATIONS OF THE NGONI KINGDOMS

After the Ngoni settled in Nyasaland their political system went 178
through three main periods of change and development up to 1939. The
first was that of pre-European days, characterized by the military kingdoms. 642
The second was the period of direct British administration, when 648
the chief features of the Ngoni kingdoms were latent and unrecognized.
The third was the period from 1933 onwards when the passing of the
Native Authority and Native Courts Ordinances gave recognition to
certain traditional forms of the Ngoni political system. Since, in their
early forms, from the middle of the nineteenth century onward, the
Ngoni kingdoms were founded on conquest, the maintenance of military [721]
power both for defence and aggression was an essential condition of their
survival. We shall therefore begin the examination of the Ngoni political
system with a chapter on their military organization. Men of the Swazi
and of trans-Zambesi clans were proud of the part their fathers and 181
grandfathers had played in Ngoni wars. These wars were recalled to the
people in the recitals of oral tradition and in the songs and dances which
were part of Ngoni culture. Cibambo, who has already been mentioned 115
as the historian of his people, wrote for me in English the following
account of Ngoni warfare in the old days, part of which, written in [124]
Tumbuka, was used as a reader for the schools in the Livingstonia
Mission area. Cibambo had, as a young boy, seen the preparations for
war, and had gone more than once as a carrier for his elder brothers who
belonged to one of the last formed regiments.

Ngoni Warfare in Old Days 539

¶ To the Ngoni war was like work and his heart rejoiced to think of it. 721
When the old men sat in the kraal the talk that roused discussion was of
war and their journeyings. All the heroes of the tribe had received their 554
praise-greetings through service in war. In this, ordinary people and
slaves came together, for though they might have been unknown to begin
with, if they were heroes in one or two wars the whole country knew them.
The slaves who showed their courage and strength in war quickly received [567]
their freedom and many also had villages of their own because of the
people they had captured in war; others obtained the standing of men in
authority. Those who were cowards were humiliated and laughed at, and [577]
those who had not entered the enemy stockade or killed a man were not
allowed to dance in triumph in the kraal but only to join in the *ligubo*
dance along with others.

[p. 28 is blank]

the south end of the lake in 1891, he pleaded with him not to use force 648 against the northern Ngoni. 'Don't fight them,' he urged, 'enlist them.' The military commander, Captain Macguire, who was present at the interview, showed interest in the idea of a new recruiting ground for the regular forces in Nyasaland, but his ideas were not pursued as it proved to be easier to continue recruiting the Yao and Tonga who had already shown themselves good military material.

In the central kingdom the first reactions of the Administration towards the Ngoni were favourable. Paramount Cikusi was visited by administrators in 1882 and 1886, and in 1890 concluded a treaty placing himself under British protection. On his death in 1891 his successor Gomani I sent messengers to inform the Administration of his father's death, to declare his allegiance to the British, and to present a bull and a cow, four tusks of ivory and twenty-five men to help in the war against the slave-raiders. In the following year 100 Ngoni warriors were drafted into the regular forces and Mr. H. H. Johnston reported: 'The Ngoni are altogether a splendid people and may be regarded as the backbone of British Central Africa.'[1] But this co-operative relationship did not last. In 1896 it was reported that 'Gomani and a number of his turbulent young headmen were opposed to our influence.'[2] Ngoni armies raided a mission station, an expeditionary force under British [726] officers was sent, the Paramount's village was attacked and his army defeated. He was taken prisoner and, refusing to walk to Zomba, was shot near Dombole in his former kingdom.

In the 1930's the Ngoni of the central kingdom referred repeatedly to the expedition sent against them, the defeat of their army, the death of their Paramount and the seizure of some of their cattle. They nursed [186] a grudge against their conqueror which coloured much of their sentiments towards Europeans. They sometimes referred to the long period of contact of the northern Ngoni kingdom with the Livingstonia Mission, [792] and contrasted it with their contacts with several missions who appeared to them to be in league with the Administration against them and not to take their side in relations with the Government as Dr. Laws had done in the north.

When Cibambo visited the central Ngoni kingdom with me in 1936 184 he was interested in making comparisons with his own Ngoni of the 178 north. He found that in central Ngoniland there were very few men who knew Ngoni songs well, and that in general the knowledge of the Ngoni language had almost died out. The big shields were not, he thought, as well cut as those in the north. Yet the war-dances were performed correctly, and the war-dress which the dancers wore was more striking than anything which had been preserved in the north.

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[1] Johnston, H. H. *Report of the First Three Years' Administration of the Eastern Portion of B.C.A.* 1894, p. 24.

[2] Johnston, H. H. *Report on Trade and General Conditions in Nyasaland*, 1896–7, p. 7.

fresh detachment came into the village from another part of the country. 535 The corpse was finally carried in a cow-skin from the hut to the grave 764 between a double line of warriors singing *ligubo* songs and thundering with their shields knocking against their knees.

The only relics, therefore, of the military tradition which could be 178 observed in the Ngoni kingdoms in the 1930's were related either to the national gatherings at the Paramount's village, or to the mourning ritual for the royal line. The knowledge of the songs and the war-dresses was preserved by the senior leading men and women of the trans-Zambesi clans. The songs which follow were sung, except for the last one, in both 533 Ngoni kingdoms, and not only when *ligubo* dances took place. Some were sung at marriage ceremonies, and some formerly as *umsindo* songs at the pre-marriage rite for girls. In northern Ngoniland the last two songs were sung in the churches, and tunes of other well-known war songs were used in the churches of the Scottish mission with different words written for them. Most of the songs when translated sound very brief. They were less brief when sung in the Ngoni language since there was repetition of certain lines, with repeated refrains, and with a series of 'sounds' such as *inyo ho, si, ye ye* which accompanied the stamping of feet and the clash of shields. These untranslatable 'sounds' were sometimes the only part of the song which was known by the younger men who had never used the Ngoni language, and they chanted them in the right places as a chorus.

The first four songs were all intended to encourage the warriors at the 537 time of mobilization before going out on a campaign. They reminded the singers that in the use of the short stabbing spear the Ngoni armies were stronger than their enemies; that they brought their fighting skill from the south-east; that, though the fight might be long, rest would come in the evening; and that the army belonged to the Paramount, the head of the kingdom. The fifth song suggested the kind of warning given to warriors by the old men—that they should not give in after a fight, but pursue the enemy and capture their cattle. The sixth song, though the reference to Longiyeka was obscure, was said to be a warning against treachery and revolt in the army. The seventh song had three themes: that death was the lot of every man, and the earth where the grave would be dug was never satisfied (*ukunona* means 'to be satisfied'); that no one would escape the universal fate of death, from the senior men wearing the head-plumes to the common people and the cattle; and that the ancestors already buried in the land would be joined by those then alive. The terms used in this song to describe the social groups among the Ngoni people were those which will occur throughout this book.

1. No Paramount can be poor because of the spear.
   Then why are you running away?

643
787

sleeping on mats they slept on grass until the required days were finished, and they scattered to their homes.

This account brings out certain elements in the ritual surrounding the *tonga*. The word *tonga* in the Ngoni language means 'rod', and was used in the very ancient folk tale *Intonga yetusi*, 'The Brass Rod'. There was no rod, however, nor anything representing one, among the medicines or ingredients which together made up the *tonga*. A descendant of one of the early 'guardians' of the *tonga* said about it:

> ¶ The *tonga* is the horn of a sheep, and the horn by itself has no real power, but there are other things which give it power like the rib of a lion. [778]

It is clear that in the past the *tonga* was regarded as giving protection to the Ngoni people, particularly by providing medicine at the accession of a new Paramount when he needed medicine for strengthening.

Other informants from the Phungwako clan said that the *tonga* provided the medicine with which the Paramount washed at the time of *incwala*, the feast of the first-fruits. [178] No one alive in the 1930's had seen that ceremony and the special songs had been forgotten. A tradition remained that the Paramount had to undergo seclusion and ritual washing with medicines before the first green crops could be eaten.

Throughout the references to the *tonga* there was no hint that it was ever worshipped or addressed in any way similar to the invocations to the ancestor spirits. It was clearly a 'medicine' possessing great power and guarded as a national treasure. The ingredients of the medicine were kept in a particular way, in a particular place, in the guardianship of a particular person. I have seen the ingredients, the place and the guardian, but I gave a promise not to reveal them. I was allowed to handle the objects and, after doing so, I had to perform the ritual act of washing my hands with cowdung. This was the form of ritual cleansing practised by the Paramount after using the medicines. [515
783]

There were two ways in which these medicines were used by the Paramount to strengthen him on his accession. He washed in the kraal with the medicines whipped into a foam. The old men said that in ancient times the water for making the medicines had to be fetched from the sea. In addition to washing he had to eat meat in which the medicines were mixed. The majority of informants said that beef was used for this ritual eating, while others said that, as in the ritual for preparing the *tonga*, the meat taken was sheep. This ritual was said to have taken place for the last time at the death of Cikusi and the accession of Gomani I, though it was hinted that it had been performed at the accession of the Ngoni chief of the Maseko clan now living in Portuguese territory.

It was clear that the Maseko Paramounts made use of the *tonga* as a royal medicine both at their accession and in time of war. The reference [766]

643 to its use at the *incwala* ceremony and dance was a reminder of the 789 former belief in the close connexion between the health and strength of 766 the Paramount and the fertility of the land and its crops, a belief which had its counterpart in the cremation of the Paramount and the sweeping of the ashes into the river to fertilize the land.

241 The *incwala*, or ceremony of the first-fruits, was of great importance 796 among the Swazi, and the Ngoni 'took it with them' when they left the south. Among the northern and central Ngoni the tradition of the ceremony remained, but the practice was given up before the kingdoms were finally established. Cibambo collected from the old men in the northern kingdom the following account of what took place at the *incwala:*

> ¶ Among the dances of the Ngoni, *ngoma*, *umsindo*, *ligubo*, *incwala* was the best and most important. They say it lasted about two weeks, or if it began when the moon was full until it became new again. When they said [643 'incwala is closed', no one sings or dances it again; when it begins every- 424] one sings the songs of *incwala* and no others. This dance belonged to the Paramount of the whole country. A description of *incwala* is difficult ● [178] because it was given up long ago. Even the old people of today have never seen it.
>
> It began in the middle of the month of *Intohoni* (January). Young men were sent to look for ripe food in the gardens by streams. The owners had not picked any nor was much of the crop nearly ready. They took some juicy stalks of maize, and pumpkins with their roots. They also looked for [824 a wild fruit like a gourd, very bitter, which some people use to stir up their dogs to make them fierce in hunting and quick in scent. This fruit 224] the Ngoni call *igumuzo*. These they mix with medicines and the *inkosi* eats it without the people knowing. The belief was that if the Paramount ate the first-fruits carelessly, or if the people were the first to taste the first-fruits of the year, there would be disaster for the *inkosi* and the country. After a month, when the crops were ripening, the *incwala* began, the crops not being completely ripe and no one having yet tasted the new crops.
>
> In the month of February the *inkosi* announced that everywhere the *incwala ye'nkosi* should begin on such-and-such a day. Quickly much beer was cooked in all the villages by everyone. On the day the beer-making began, the dance began also. The word was sent round everywhere: *incwala seigwabuliwe*, '*incwala* is now opened'. All the people went to the central village of Elangeni, the village of Hlacwayo. They took crops which had been planted in December, *impala*, and added the first *igumuzo* fruit to them. Great crowds of people gathered at Elangeni and danced. Many were in the kraal but many more were dancing outside. All were dressed carefully. They danced with reeds in their hands or with the sticks of their shields. It seemed as though the song everywhere was the same. Women going for wood and water, and children and youths, [535] wherever they went, the song was on their lips. In dancing the women were by themselves, and the men by themselves. They faced each other in the dance. They were bending their bodies backwards and forwards, and moving their necks and shoulders.

relationship, described in terms of brotherhood, and this brotherhood 643
was further emphasized by the ban on inter-marriage between the Ngozo
and Maseko clans. The significance of the Ngozo boy, when he became 644
a man, building in the *cigodlo* where the Paramount's sons built, was 608
often stressed by informants. Though his huts were in this *cigodlo* section of the royal village, as if he were a son of the Paramount's family, the Paramount never said 'child' to him but invariably 'brother'.

In all the occasions of daily life, as well as in those of special ritual significance, the Ngozo boy stood or sat next to the Paramount. The Ngoni insisted that the status of a man or woman should be expressed in terms of sitting or standing in order of precedence. Sitting or standing [554] next to the Paramount implied that that individual had the highest possible social status. The leading members of the Ngozo clan in their villages displayed an awareness of their social prestige which was very noticeable. This high rank was, however, in the past bought with a price—that of sharing in the dangers of the Paramountcy. This was acknowledged through the gift of cattle to the boy's family, sent at the time when he 'entered the chieftainship' with the Paramount.

The institution of the royal shadow came to an end with the advent 643
of the Europeans. An Ngozo man acted as a royal shadow on the acces- 644
sion of Cikusi but did not die on his funeral pyre. When Cikusi's son
Gomani I was installed as *inkosi*, an Ngozo boy 'entered the chieftainship' 178
with him and stood with him 'in the smoke of the *tonga*' when the army went to war. It was this Gomani I who was killed by the British, and there was no royal ritual at this death, and no cremation in a stream in which the Ngozo boy could share. The royal shadow retired in those troubled days to his father's village, where he died in 1937. It was alleged that no Ngozo man stood in this relationship to Gomani II, either at his accession, which took place during the period of Direct Rule, or in 1933 when his Paramount Chieftaincy was recognized. Informants showed a certain hesitation in answering direct questions on this topic, which was attributable partly to the fact that the Paramount was a Christian, and partly to a reluctance to discuss the continued use of 'royal medicines'. The following account of the royal shadow was given by informants of the Nzunga and Ngozo clans.

❡ When the Paramount entered the chieftainship he stood with a man from the Ngozo clan. The Ngozo people are of one blood with the Paramount, because they stand together when entering the chieftainship. When the Paramount of the Maseko dies, he dies together with one of the Ngozo. It was so when there died Ngwana, Mputa, Cikusi.

When the Ngoni came into this country they stopped killing an Ngozo man when the Paramount died. When the Paramount died a young man of the Ngozo clan just stood beside the body of the Paramount, and when making the funeral pyre of the Paramount, he also was there until they set fire to it. If anyone wanted to kill an Ngozo man by the

643 644 water and the pyre, he was refusing, saying 'No, not in these days, but formerly.'

[178] When Magona Ngozo was with Cikusi he was staying with him in the daytime. Magona had his own huts and Cikusi his. When eating, Cikusi ate alone, but afterwards he gave food to Magona. When Cikusi was washing it was together with Magona. When he went to the bush, they went together. When Cikusi was washing with the *tonga*, he was doing it with Magona. When the warriors were going out, Cikusi and Magona stood together, and they made fire for the medicines and they stood together in the smoke and then the warriors went out. So, when mentioning Magona, they said: 'the shadow of Cikusi'. When they were eating in the *bwalo*, the *nsima* (porridge) was brought to Cikusi, but if some *alumuzana* came, the wives of Magona cooked *nsima* and gave it to the *alumuzana*. When Cikusi died, Magona could take his wives if he wanted. The Ngozo man could tell the Paramount anything, good or bad, and stay like the mouth of the Paramount.

[762] When the Paramount died formerly, the Ngozo man dressed in his war-dress. When he came near the fire he danced with the shield in his hand. When the fire blazed up he ran and jumped on the fire. So the Maseko people gave cattle to the Ngozo people, to quieten their hearts because they were brothers. And when another Paramount was installed they gave an Ngozo man to stand with him. The father of the man who died with the Paramount received cattle and villages to rule over and gifts. The Paramounts gave cattle because they said: 'Since our brother is going to stand with the Paramount, if that Paramount dies, he also will be killed, so the Paramount ought to give cattle like *lobola* so they may quieten the hearts of his brothers.' Though these cattle are not given for a woman but for a man, any Maseko man ought not to marry an Ngozo woman because there is this brotherhood.

And this man of the Ngozo clan was like a chief because he had men to manage his affairs at his door, as did the Paramount. And if he died his funeral was like that of a chief. But the day the Paramount died the Ngozo man was killed. When the Paramount washed with medicines, he was washing with the Ngozo man. When drinking beer, he was drinking in the same hut as the Paramount. When the Paramount was sacrificing he was together with the Ngozo man, and they did not leave each other.

[262] The Ngozo people have a thanking name (*isibongo*) Maphonya. It is they who were standing with the Paramounts, and the Ngozo people were in the section of Ziyembe. Their avoidances were the same as all the Ngoni, especially fish and elephant. When Cikusi died Gulo stood with Gomani when he entered the chieftainship. Gulo was the son of Magona.

The royal village and the daily routine of the Paramount

643 361 644 In Part I, Chapter II we referred to the process by which each Paramount, after his accession, went out from his father's village to build his own. The Ngoni called this *ukupumisa inkosi* (to send out the Paramount) and the term used for the new village, *lusungulu* (the needle), was said to signify 'the front village where you expect to find the Paramount'.

643 all their things. Even when the Paramount agreed that a man should be
682 killed he ordered that all his possessions were to come to him, stock,
slaves, wives and children. These were called *izizi zenkosi*, the things of
the Paramount, and they were divided among the houses of the Paramount,
and the master of the man killed got nothing. This was done to
teach the fathers of the villages that they should not sentence their people
to death because they coveted their goods or people. The Paramount
taught them by taking all the belongings of the one killed and they got
nothing. Of course the Paramount's and chiefs' villages grew quickly in
684 this way. At the beginning the punishment for adultery and murder was
death; in adultery both the man and the woman were killed. Beginning
●178 from the time of Mbelwa and Mtwalo the penalty for adultery has been
changed. The man who did it was despoiled of his goods or paid compensation.
The courts agreed that any man wronged by such adultery
could go with a war-party to the village of the guilty man and take what
he wanted, but not kill any person. The Paramount took no notice of such
an affair.

671 No account of the conduct of cases in Ngoni courts would be complete
without reference to the popular interest in and support for the
law. After a day in the courts the *izinduna* and the *amadoda* talked of
almost nothing else. They went over and over the details of the cases,
and recalled former cases of a similar kind and compared the judgements
given. They criticized each other sharply for the handling of
cases, and such criticism was taken well on the whole, as a contribution
to the process of interpreting and enforcing the law rather than as a
personal affront. The attendance of the public at the court sessions was
encouraged so long as they observed due decorum. When talking broke
out among the onlookers, the *induna* in charge bellowed 'Silence' in a
voice of thunder. If a group of women continued to chatter and giggle
after the *induna* had called for silence, he told them to go home. The
[857] interest in courts and cases extended to the play of children and to the
conduct by the boys of their own affairs in the *laweni* or boys' dormitory.
I often saw the young son of a chief or *induna* organizing his playmates
into a court and allocating roles to them and in his play imitating the
voice and gestures of his father.

631 NGONI OFFICE-BEARERS

622 In Chapter II of Part I we stated that the main element in the Ngoni
645 political system in the 1930's was a ruling aristocracy supported by a
[565] hierarchy of officials. In this chapter we shall first look at two texts, one
by Cibambo on the northern kingdom and the other by a big *induna* in
the central kingdom, explaining the relationship of the different office-bearers
to the Paramount. We shall see how there were in effect two
groups of office-bearers, one related to the territorial divisions of the
kingdoms, and the other consisting of state or national officials and those
connected with the royal village. There was no set of terms which could

be used exclusively for either group, and in fact there was considerable 622
overlapping between them. 631

We begin with the text by Cibambo which emphasizes the hier- 645
archy of office-bearers in the northern kingdom in pre-European days and illustrates the correlation between the courts and the political administration.

> The former government of the Ngoni was based on the following:
>
> (1) Above all was the one called *Inkosi* or *UBaba*, because they thought of him as the father of the country, the head.
>
> (2) After him came the *izinduna*. Sometimes there were two or perhaps four. These were very highly honoured and the Paramount feared them greatly: he called them *Bobaba* and their words had great weight with him. They were the ones who gave advice to the Paramount and if any grave matter arose he called them to hear what they thought. The Paramount in his village had also his old men who helped him with everything small that did not need to go to the *izinduna*. If there was word that the Paramount was meeting with the *izinduna* he first of all met with the old men and asked for advice to place before the *izinduna*. And these old men had the right to speak when the Paramount took counsel with the *izinduna*.
>
> (3) After the *izinduna* came the *amakosana*, or lesser chiefs. These were perhaps the younger brothers of the ruling Paramount, and had their districts under him. They also had their *izinduna* and were responsible for their own districts. When the Paramount met with the *izinduna*, the *amakosana* were also there if it was considered fitting.
>
> (4) Then there were the *alumuzana*. These were over villages or smaller districts. Their villages were called *amakanda* (heads) and they had power in their small districts to carry out the laws and they looked to the *izinduna* for instructions.
>
> (5) Lastly the old men (*madoda*) who wore the head-ring (*cidlodlo*) but [888]
> not all of them; only those who had good sense and understood the ways of the tribe.
>
> All these five divisions had their share in the government of the country. If there was a great court of justice, all these were to be found at it, and took part in the discussions. If fresh matter arose, or new laws, these delivered them to their villages. Also there were men called [203]
> *amanxusa*, messengers. These were men chosen to run with messages from the Paramount to the *izinduna* or *amakosana*, to go with and return with news. Almost every village or little district had its chosen messengers. All the types (2), (3) and (4) had their messengers. When anything happened, the messenger in the village of the Paramount made a general proclamation and called the *amanxusa* together. When the *amanxusa* had heard the message they scattered throughout all the country. So in the districts and by this way news travelled very quickly.

178

In the central kingdom one of the big *izinduna* explained the change 622
in their system which occurred after crossing the Zambesi: 631

> When the Ngoni were coming from the south they chose lesser chiefs
> and *izinduna* from the *amakosana*, who were the Paramount's brothers, 645

178 622 631 645 sons of his father and of his father's brothers. These *amakosana* were honoured next to the Paramount. The *alumuzana* were for justice in the courts, and for being the 'ears of the Paramount' in all the country. The change was made by Mputa because he saw that if the *amakosana* were given power they claimed to be big chiefs themselves. Therefore he chose for the courts and for the leaders in war and for lesser chiefs the *alumuzana* and *izinduna* who were clever and whom they could trust.

184 622 631 645 [692] The diagram on p. 99 relates to the period between 1933 and 1939 and sets out first the officials in the territorial divisions of the Ngoni kingdoms from the Paramount to the headman of a village. In the northern kingdom only the Paramount and the six chiefs had recognized courts, the chiefs' courts operating for their districts and the Paramount's court for the whole kingdom. There were two sets of office-bearers who had no courts but who exercised authority over groups of villages. One group consisted of members of the Jere clan who were not recognized chiefs but were *amakosana*, literally 'children of the chief' but used as a rule for all members of the royal clan. Only certain *amakosana* had villages under them. The other group consisted of the heads of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans who owned several villages and sometimes had authority over a large area. Cibambo put this group below that of the chiefs, and other informants confirmed this as the pre-European pattern. But the informants also said that many of the powerful *alumuzana* formerly had their own courts and did not have to bring their cases to the chiefs' courts as they did in the 1930's. At the bottom of the territorial hierarchy came the headmen of single villages. In some cases the village headman had formerly been an *induna* in a large village which had broken up. Some were of the royal clan or of Swazi clans. The majority belonged to the local tribes and were owners of villages which were for the most part villages of one kinship group.

The text about the hierarchy in the central kingdom shows that a deliberate change had been made in the traditional pattern to avoid a struggle between the Paramount and his brothers when they had recognized positions as chiefs. The *alumuzana* who appear in the diagram as chiefs were the six who were recognized in 1933 as Subordinate Native Authorities. There were other *alumuzana* who were not so recognized, and certain members of the royal clan, all of whom owned a number of villages but had to take their cases to the recognized courts. The division caused by setting up the Portuguese boundary in the 1890's left many of the leaders of the Maseko clan on the Portuguese side, with the result that the number of *amakosana* owning villages and taking any prominent part in the life of the kingdom was very small; and another large group of the Maseko clan were in Dedza district under Chief Kacindamoto. The majority of village headmen in the central kingdom were of local tribes, and their villages were as a rule much larger than those in the northern kingdom.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956

FR5 Ngoni FR5

645 He was a student of Ngoni history and custom, and used his travels as treasurer to collect new information. He always intended to write a history of the central kingdom as Cibambo had done for the northern kingdom, but his public duties never gave him time.

643 In making contact with his people and keeping in touch with his
645 officials the Paramount did not rely only on their visits to the royal
village. Two or three times a year he toured his kingdom, accompanied
574 by his *mlomo wenkosi* and the treasurer, and stayed at the head villages of the chiefs and also of other *alumuzana*. The treasurer spoke enthusiastically of the Paramount's habit of making himself known to his people and enabling them to present petitions to him in person. He met village headmen on their own ground, and *alumuzana* who were unostentatiously directing the affairs of their villages and areas, as well as the official chiefs or Subordinate Native Authorities. He saw for himself how his own regulations were being carried out and how the measures for agricultural improvement and cattle-dipping which the Government was promoting were being adopted. These visits in his own territory were followed by visits to Blantyre and Zomba and to the mining centres outside the country where his people were working. He was thus able to check on the conditions in the subordinate chiefs' areas which had been created by the prolonged absence of men from the villages.

The Paramount and changes in law and custom

643 Through his school education at Blantyre, his membership of a
178 Christian church, and through attending the chiefs' course at the Jeanes
School in Zomba, the Paramount stood between the old and the new in the changing conditions in his kingdom. After the 1933 Ordinance one of the changes in administration was that a Native Authority had to budget
652 for income and expenditure in his area. The income for 1935 for this
area was £959, made up of a share of the taxes; fifty per cent. of the yearly
[434] rental of stores; court fines and fees and beer licences. The expenditure was £832, under items of salaries to the Paramount and subordinate chiefs; salaries for messengers, councillors, clerks and policemen; payment of fourpence per tax to the headmen of the villages so that it was to their advantage to collect the full amount; and a small sum for uniforms, office expenses and such items as cash boxes and handcuffs. This budget for the central Ngoni kingdom was drawn up in consultation with the District Officer by the Paramount and his treasurer. It was a source of great pride to the treasurer that he had, as we have seen, his own key to a safe in the District Office where he put the tax money collected in the area, and drew out sums needed for expenditure in the Paramount's office.

744 In 1933, as already mentioned, a meeting of subordinate chiefs, *alumu-*
653 *zana* and headmen heard the Paramount's proposals for new regulations
about village improvement and agreed to them. These regulations were

called 'to make a clean village', and were one of the results of the Para- 744
mount's visits to his area. They included building latrines, sweeping the 653
open spaces round huts, disposing of rubbish, mending roofs and fences, smooth mudding of houses, digging wells. The Paramount appointed three men who were called *masanitari* to go round the villages to inspect and report to him, and instituted a system of fines for failure to carry out these measures. In addition to promoting clean villages, he ordered that cattle were to be dipped regularly, cultivation was to be carried out by a ridge system instead of mounds, and all sick people, especially women, were to attend hospital. He sent his own daughter to hospital for her confinement, and she attended the baby clinic regularly with her child.

Some of the changes in local customs which the Paramount ordered 178
were not so easy to enforce as the newer practices in relation to health 643
and hygiene. He forbade drinking at night when quarrelling became
rife; he prohibited Cewa dances such as *vinyau* and *malombo* and the 656
Cewa female puberty rite of *cinamwali*. The only dances allowed were 563
the Ngoni dance *ngoma*; the *ligubo* or war-dance at his village; and the individual hero's dance (*ligiya*) when a lion or leopard was brought to his village. Marriages had to be registered, and births and deaths recorded and reported to the Paramount when he visited the villages.

It was always possible to start an argument among the senior men sitting on the Paramount's *bwalo*, or on the steps of his court-house, either on the subject of how far Ngoni law and custom had replaced local Ntumba and Cewa custom, or on the advantages and disadvantages of the modern reforms of the Paramount. Some of the older men were anxious to establish that the Ngoni, meaning those of the trans-Zambesi clans, had not only achieved a political conquest but had also changed the practices of the local peoples and made them observe Ngoni customs. They used to assert, among other things, that the local people had become patrilineal, and had adopted a *lobola* form of marriage—statements which could easily be disproved and were laughed at by the onlookers. On the other hand, they were right when they said that Ngoni laws and court procedure were universally approved and followed, and that the younger generations at least were willing to carry out the welfare measures of the Paramount. One constant feature of all such discussions of recent changes was the steady support given by the Ntumba and Tengo clan leaders to the Paramount and his rule. This, more than any other feature, proved that the trans-Zambesi pattern of political rule had triumphed, and that in their loyalty to the Paramount and their practice of Ngoni custom the village headmen and their families could be counted on to support the rulers.

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CHAPTER I

NGONI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A BRIEF review was given in Chapter III of Part I of the main elements 114 of Ngoni culture, analysed into 'patterns' covering kinship, village lay-out, ritual, ceremonial, and language. In this section we shall be considering 121 the principal social institutions embodying Ngoni culture: their clans, houses, families and age sets. We shall find evidence in the two kingdoms of an extensive common element in the social organization which the Ngoni brought with them from the south. Some important diversities will be evident also, such as the variations in virilocal residence found in the central kingdom, and the less widespread practice there of *lobola* marriage. Those elements which were common to Ngoni social organization in both kingdoms were often those which distinguished Ngoni culture from that of the neighbouring peoples. Patrilineal descent, the house system, the ranking of clans, the *laweni* organization of boys' life and activities—these were all distinctively Ngoni, practised by families of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and sometimes adopted by individuals and families of other clans who had been associated with the Ngoni over long periods. Nevertheless, in many of the villages of the [563 central kingdom there were clearly two cultures existing side by side: the Ngoni culture being that of an aristocratic minority and the local 565] culture that of the majority, who in the kingdom were equally subjects of the Paramount but in their villages possessed inferior social status.

Indications were to be seen, even in the more conservative and more 178 isolated northern kingdom, that modern influences were affecting Ngoni social institutions. We have already noticed some of the effects of the cessation of warfare on a social system founded on military traditions. The exodus of young men from Ngoni villages to seek work elsewhere was very extensive, especially in the northern kingdom, where the level of education was higher but employment was not available, and this had repercussions on the age of marriage, the distribution of wealth, and the undertaking of family responsibilities, including the care of the old people. The gradual decline in polygyny, largely but not entirely due to [595 the work of missions, was beginning to have its effects on the working 797] of the house system and on the interrelations of the generations within the family group.

In the 1930's many of these modern changes were appearing but the traditional institutions were still functioning, and the Ngoni leaders themselves were clear about those forms and activities which were distinctively their own.

households of her co-wives who were junior to her in the house, and 562
the households of her sons' wives. These women also decided when to 571
undertake certain work in cultivation or in harvesting crops, when to
brew beer, when to re-polish the floors of huts and the sitting place in 592
front of the huts, when to replenish the stock of cloth, ornaments and beads, baskets and mats, which were part of the wealth of the house. Other occasions for the exercise of authority were attending and superintending women's confinements and the private puberty rite of the girls, advising on matters of health, and supervising the training of children.

All these activities of the owners of the houses were so much part of 592
the day-to-day life of a village that they could pass almost unnoticed 554
unless a detailed analysis were made. The position and authority of
owners of houses was, however, immediately evident on ceremonial 571
occasions. These included the pre-marriage ceremony of *umsindo*, which
was abandoned after the Europeans came; the series of visits and ex- [178]
changes leading up to the marriage ceremony, *mtimba*; brewing beer on a number of occasions, for dancing *ngoma* and *ligubo*, for funerals and subsequent ritual shaving, or for entertaining important visitors whose coming was expected so that beer could be prepared in advance. On all such occasions, the courtyard surrounding the *indlunkulu* was a scene of great activity. Men put on their war-dance equipment there; the beer pots were assembled there; meat and blood for feasts were cooked there, while the less important maize porridge (*nsima*) was cooked in subordinate households. From the courtyard of the *indlunkulu* a procession of the *manina* (senior women) led by the owner of the house went out to greet visitors, to go to the beer drink, to take part in the dances, and to perform the ritual connected with births, deaths and marriages.

MARRIAGE IN NGONI SOCIETY

Earlier in this chapter it was said that a new house derived from the 581
marriage of a leading man to his big wife. Since marriage was so closely
linked with the continuance and development of houses, and since a 182
new wife when married separated from her own mother's house and became a member of her husband's mother's house, I have included a discussion of marriage in this chapter on houses.

There were three main principles in Ngoni marriage. It was a binding contract sealed by the exchange of cattle; it established succession in the male line; it formed a link between leading Swazi clans. When we examine in detail the organization of Ngoni marriage we see that its objectives were to build up a series of inter-clan and inter-family relationships. These began with inter-marriage between the leading Swazi clans, in order to strengthen the political and social relationships within that inner circle of Ngoni society. The political allegiance of leading individuals from clans of non-Swazi origin was strengthened by marriage

593 extended to his brothers' sons, especially if their father was dead. Following the same pattern, a man's sons who were away at work sent back money to their father who bought cattle with it, or spent it as the sons asked. It was clear in the 1930's that Ngoni men rarely sent money directly to their wives, though they frequently asked their father to give money to their wives and to buy for them cloth or needed household equipment.

562 Within the larger orbit of the male family responsibilities women
had their more restricted but clearly defined sphere. At a woman's
844 confinement she was looked after by her husband's own mother, aided
593 by his other mothers and by his sisters if they were present in the
village. At the 'coming out' of the new member of the family, ten to
fourteen days after birth, the woman and the baby, bathed and ritually
562 cleansed, were seated on a mat outside the hut and presented to the
male members of the father's family who gave small gifts to the baby.
846 If it was a boy, the father's mother generally carried it to the gate of
593 the kraal where the men were sitting, to present it to them as one who
would eventually herd the cattle. On this occasion, or soon after, the
[553] child's name was chosen, usually by the father's father, who prepared
and gave to the mother a calf-skin or goat-skin for carrying the child in.
The meat of the animal was cooked by the father's mother and a small
feast was held for the father's mothers, sisters, brothers and their wives,
and any others of the father's family who had helped in the confinement.[1] After the child had thus been acknowledged in its father's family
circle, the mother took the baby to visit her own family, who also gave
it presents.

593 During the rearing of the child, its father's female relatives assumed
responsibility for giving the young mother advice. The father's mother
862 was expected to note the stage at which the child should be weaned,
always if possible before the mother's next pregnancy. If the father's
mother was unobservant, the other senior women of the husband's
family would rebuke her and say 'Look now you are foolish because the
child has been endangered. You are like an enemy to it.' These women
then took the initiative and insisted on weaning the child. They said
to the baby's mother 'We want to wean the child.' They made a paste
of ground chillies and put it on the mother's breasts and covered them
with a skin or cloth. The child was taken from her after it had tried to
[853] suck and had been refused, and given to the father's mother or sister,
who looked after it with the help of a nursemaid. It was fed on cow's
milk, *amasi* (milk curds), and gruel.

The publicity given to the weaning and the initiative taken by the
senior women of the husband's family were intended to inform others in
[178] the village that the parents were now free to have another child. This was
one aspect of the old Ngoni form of family planning and, in describing

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[1] This feast was also held when a carrying cloth was given instead of a skin.

what took place, informants were anxious to point this out. They 593
also admitted that its successful carrying out depended on several fac- 862
tors which no longer operated. The former Ngoni households with a 178
number of servants and nursemaids were only to be found in the
families of the Paramount and subordinate chiefs. The rigid separation
of the girl from her own family at marriage was no longer usual in the
central kingdom where Ngoni marriages often took place in the same
village, and where daughters of important men stayed in their fathers'
villages at marriage instead of leaving.

In Ngoni households family sleeping and eating arrangements 513
depended not upon the small individual family but on the extended 592
family group and on the boys' dormitory (*laweni*). As a general rule
small children slept with their mother in her hut, but when her husband
was sleeping with her it was considered wrong to have any but very
young children in the hut. Boys up to the age of seven, when they went
to the *laweni*, and girls up to their marriage, usually slept in the hut of
a mother or a widowed sister of their father.

Each wife, after she had been 'shown the hearth-stones', had a 264
granary built for her by her husband or her husband's brothers where [343]
she stored grain. On the rafters in her hut, and in pots and jars on the
enclosed verandah, and in pits dug under the eaves, she stored other [251]
foodstuffs, such as chillies, beans and sweet potatoes. From these supplies,
supplemented by fresh 'relish' from the gardens or bush, she
cooked daily meals which she served to her husband, and which her
younger sons in the *laweni* fetched to eat there, while she ate with her
young children. Her husband's meals and the older boys' meals were
taken in company with the male members of his kinship group and
other villagers at the men's meeting-place by the gate of the kraal. His
wife sent his food by a child in a covered basket with the small pot of
relish on top. The publicity of the men's eating habits made them
critical among their fellows of their wives' cooking, and this was a strong
incentive among Ngoni wives to maintain a high standard of cooking.
In addition to sending food to her husband, an Ngoni wife was expected
to send a basket of food now and then to her father-in-law, or 356
to any of her brothers-in-law who had assisted her to mend a roof or
build a granary. 593

Within a wife's hut, not only food but other possessions, both personal 342
and household, were stored. Clothes for daily and ceremonial use; mats
for sleeping on and for drying grain; pots for water, cooking, and beer- [415]
brewing; ornamental jars for storing beans; baskets for carrying grain;
food baskets embroidered with beads—the Ngoni wife of good family
expected to possess all these and to keep them carefully. Many of them
she brought with her on her marriage or had given her later as presents
by her own parents and family, in order that she might not appear poor
or of low rank among her husband's people. For the same reason, she

and docility, especially to older women. This last was intended to stand 562
her in good stead when she went to be married in a strange village and 565
would be expected to show subservience to her mother-in-law. At the 867
same time, since the girl belonged to a high-ranking clan, she knew, and
so did those who were training her, that she would eventually have to
exercise authority and teach others what to do and show them how to
do it. She would also be expected to have a mind of her own and to
speak out on occasions to her husband and, when she grew older,
to rebuke women in her house or in her service if they did anything
amiss.

In pre-European days, between the private puberty ritual and her 881
marriage, the Ngoni girl went through another ceremony, the *umsindo*.
This was a pre-marriage rite, and was in many instances followed 836
almost immediately by marriage. It was held for girls of high-ranking 565
families, though their companions from their own and other villages
shared in the ritual. The ceremony was abandoned after the missionaries [797]
came, but many of the songs and the dances were well-known to
the leading Ngoni women. I saw many *umsindo* dances in the northern 178]
and central kingdoms and collected a number of the songs which were
still in use, some sung to solo instruments, such as the *igubu*, and others
sung at funerals or at tribal gatherings. Those *umsindo* songs which
referred to sexual intercourse and used expressions which were considered [195]
obscene, had been sung only at the ceremony itself. The Ngoni
made a practice of referring to genital organs and to sexual intercourse
in veiled language. As soon as the meaning of the terms became obvious, [831]
they were disguised by other allusive terms. The degree of obscenity in
the actual words of songs was therefore very difficult to establish, but
Ngoni informants were always clear about which could be sung in public
and which only on occasions of licence or strictly in private.

The *umsindo* ceremony as a preliminary to marriage fulfilled certain
functions. It was a public declaration that the girl for whom it was held
had been examined and found to be a virgin, for it was not held for
anyone who had been deflowered in earlier love affairs. It emphasized the [554]
social rank and the wealth of the girl's father, for only rich and important
men could afford to hold *umsindo* for their daughters. It had a strong
element of a *rite de passage* in it, for the girls were secluded in a hut
during most of the ceremony, they fasted, they were given instruction
by older women, and they were finally 'brought out' of the hut and
adorned with parts of the beasts slaughtered, and with beads given as
presents by friends and relatives. Perhaps the chief significance of the
umsindo was the fact that it was a ceremony held for the girl in her
father's village. It was an assertion of her membership in her own
family and village circle, and of her father's status and of his regard for
her. There is no doubt that the Ngoni women of high rank had a keen
sense of their own importance and position; the *umsindo* ceremony

by two youths who were friends and who announced their intention, and 561
then were joined by other pairs. 572

These forms of an age-set system which the Ngoni brought with them
from the south were still in the 1930's a significant element in village 561
life. The greatest change had occurred in the cessation of warfare and, 178
with the enforcement of peace, the recognized stages mentioned in the beginning of this chapter had to a large extent disappeared. Though the boys and men were no longer divided into pre-warriors, warriors, and post-warriors, the institution of the *laweni* and the important role played by the *madoda* were two distinctive elements in Ngoni village life. So also was the form and content of the training given to Ngoni girls of Swazi clans, which largely determined the role played by the *manina* in village affairs.

178 769 764 In the central kingdom there were two instances of a modern adaptation of the ancestor cult, both of which were evidence of its close links with the aristocratic tradition; one related to a *mulumuzana* of a Swazi clan, the other to the royal clan. One of the first things which caught the eye of a visitor to the village of Mcakhatha was a large circular brick and cement tomb with a wooden cross on the top, in the middle of the village by the main kraal and within sight of the ruling chief's hut. It was the tomb of Njolomole Nzunga I, son of Golozela Nzunga who gave the cattle for NaMlangeni's *lobola*, and father of the ruling Chief Njolomole Nzunga II. The idea of this memorial originated with Lopati Nzunga, younger brother of Njolomole I and head of the *gogo* section of the village, and he had organized its erection. The bricks and cement were given by Europeans in the neighbourhood, and three beasts were killed for meat for those who carried the materials. The money to pay for the bricklayers' wages was raised by the sale of another beast. The name on the wooden cross was cut by the Chief's brother-in-law who was a carpenter, and Lopati said that the cross was for writing the name on and had no Christian significance. The tomb was declared 'open' to the public in the presence of a large number of people. A beast was presented to the Paramount Chief, and another beast was killed and cooked for a feast in the village. Beer was brewed in the huts of the two leading widows who had been in the big house and second house of Njolomole I.

This tomb was a memorial and not a grave, for Njolomole I had been buried in Ngoni fashion on the edge of the kraal, the fence of which was enlarged to take in the grave. It was regarded as a central point in the [576 201] village. Ngoni visitors saluted it as they went by with the right arm upraised in Ngoni fashion, and war-dances and *ngoma* dances took place beside it. The idea of a brick tomb with a cross on top was of course a modern concept taken from European cemeteries in Nyasaland which Lopati had seen. It cost six cattle to put it up and 'open' it, and these cattle were taken from the herds of the big house of Njolomole I.

In the chapter on the Paramount (Part II, Chapter II) it was pointed out that in the central kingdom the Paramount Gomani I was shot as a result of the 'war with the English' when he refused to walk to Zomba for his trial. On the Zomba road near the turning to the mission station of Dombole was a track leading into some woods. In an open clearing was a brick and cement tomb to Gomani I, subscribed to by the central Ngoni (including those living in the towns of Blantyre and Zomba). A memorial fund called 'The late Gomani Memorial Fund' was opened in 1926, and three years later those who had organized the fund formed the Angoni Highlands Association, mainly of Ngoni working in Blantyre and Zomba and wishing to maintain their links with their home villages. In discussing the origin of this fund for the memorial informants pointed out that they were aware that Gomani I, unlike his father and grand-

father, had been a fierce ruler, and had gathered round him bands of 178
young men who were not easily restrained. Though they could judge his 764
character in this objective way, they respected his office, and hence his
death and the confiscation of cattle which followed were a deep injury 769
to Ngoni pride. So thirty years after his death they collected money and put up the memorial, and the appeal was supported for three main reasons. One was to commemorate this Paramount who had not had the traditional cremation by a river; another was to remove the shame of his death; the last was to draw together all his people in a common act. Every year numbers of Ngoni gathered at this memorial and held a Christian service which was followed by a general meeting. This memorial service and meeting had a definite link with the ancestor cult, and illustrated in a particular form Ngoni beliefs in the relation of the living and the dead.

In the 1930's, as we saw in Chapter III of Part I, the form of Ngoni funerals and the ritual of mourning were closely related to the ancestor cult and were practised by the Ngoni aristocracy. These forms of ritual and their beliefs they brought with them from the south, and they were an important part of Ngoni culture. We shall see in a later chapter how some of these cultural elements were combined with Christian ritual, both for leading individuals of Swazi clans and for lesser members of those clans.

CHAPTER II

CATTLE AND THE ANCESTOR CULT

THERE are many references throughout this study to the importance 121
of cattle among the Ngoni. In this chapter the place of cattle in Ngoni
life will be examined with reference to the ancestor cult, and hence cer- 233
tain limitations have been imposed in the selection of material and its interpretation. There will, for example, be no analysis of the role of cattle in the economic life of Ngoni families and villages. Much of the material discussed has an economic significance which is immediately apparent, but the limitations set will not allow the economic implications of certain practices to be pursued further here. It is important for the main purpose of this chapter to make a brief analysis of some factors in the ownership, care, and use of cattle, and to follow that with references to some of the values and attitudes inherent in the Ngoni ownership and use of cattle. I made a preliminary analysis of these factors in a memorandum on standards of living in the central kingdom, published

262 1930's that the Ngoni did not live as well as they might and had, in fact, an impoverished diet, because they did not make full use, and sometimes very little use, of the milk and meat which they had available. In pre-European days, when the possession of cattle was confined to the Paramount, the chiefs and leading *alumuzana*, there was a continuous slaughter of animals to provide a regular diet of meat and *ulubende*, the cooked blood which the Ngoni liked very much. The heads of the big houses saw that there was always on hand *amasi*, the milk curds which was the form in which adults took their milk, fresh milk being reserved for young children and herd-boys. This provision of meat, *ulubende* and *amasi* was only possible for those who had plenty of cattle, [721] and in both kingdoms wars and raids were carried out partly to obtain fresh supplies of cattle from neighbouring and unconquered tribes. As we saw in the chapter on the Paramount, in pre-European days the *alumuzana* who lived near enough to the royal village made a practice of calling frequently, if not daily, and such calls were rewarded by their being asked to eat with the Paramount, and 'food' in those days was predominantly meat. Between fighting seasons, that is during the rains, the young men (*amajaha*) who were newly recruited to the regiments were kept busy in and around the Paramount's village and the head [883] villages of the *alumuzana*, mending fences, making shields, and clearing new land. When they were thus employed they also were fed by the Paramount or *mulumuzana*, who regarded these periodic feasts for the *amajaha* as one of the first calls on the consumption of his cattle. The Ngoni later rationalized this earlier procedure of restricting meat and milk consumption to certain groups of people by arguing that it made the young warriors strong and able to fight and endure hardships, and they declared that the senior men and women who also shared the Paramount's supplies lived long and had great wisdom and strength of character. This rationalization was not only looking back to a past Utopia. It was also based on the argument that Europeans ate meat regularly and that they were strong, both physically and politically.

262 178 The European criticism in the 1930's that the Ngoni did not make full dietary use of their cattle and their products was justified, but there are two factors to note in this connexion. One was that the number of those who lived well on meat and milk in the old days was relatively small—confined in fact to cattle-owners, women owners of big houses, and warriors. The situation changed after the Europeans came, and a large number of people owned a few cattle and many of the new owners had no tradition about using their products. Among the cattle-owners of the Swazi clans the tradition of cooking blood and making curds continued and both were valued as food, but some of those who had only recently become owners of cattle did not know these practices, and 262 I came across many cattle-owners of local tribes who did not know how 272 to milk a cow. The failure to use milk in the Ngoni diet was due partly

178 The pressure on the Ngoni to possess ready cash was directly
231 related to their prestige in the villages and kingdoms, and to the status
437 of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. Money was needed for good
554 buildings and good clothing, two of the modern signs of status which
the Ngoni could not ignore. Faced with this situation, and unwilling,
[453] except among the urban Ngoni, to invest savings in banks,[1] they manipulated their cattle tradition to suit the new situation in several ways. In place of the frequent slaughter for food, there were occasional sales for cash. Money earned in wages was invested in cattle. The drive therefore was all the time to increase the herds, in order to be able to convert them into cash when the need arose.

Values and attitudes in cattle-ownership

Any attempt to probe below the surface of current practices in acquir-
114 ing, caring for and using cattle should be preceded by an extensive
233 survey of cattle-keeping, including the full implications of their place
565 in the economy of Ngoni village and family life. Since a complete survey is not possible here, the assessment of the values inherent in the ownership of cattle and the resultant attitudes towards their acquisition and use is related in this chapter to the relationships between the living Ngoni and their ancestors. These values were primarily those of the senior men and women of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and hence those of the aristocracy. They were reflected in the attitudes of groups who owned cattle in the villages. Further analysis would show variations in the attitudes of individual members of those groups who possessed cattle, and would also show an approximation to the Ngoni attitudes by members of other groups, for example, village headmen of Ntumba clans whose fathers had journeyed and fought with the Ngoni in the past. The spread of cattle-keeping beyond the former exclusive monopoly of the leading clans and of leading men in them resulted in a number of different attitudes towards the acquisition and use of cattle. Some of these variations were suggested earlier in this chapter in the brief comparisons of Cewa and Ngoni ownership of cattle.

The primary value of cattle to the Ngoni was the security they repre-
231 sented. This security lay in assurance of social position, in being able
556 to meet penalties imposed by the courts, in the potential command of labour, in the enjoyment of much prized food, in the performance of ritual for the dead and in sacrifices to the ancestors. The converse of this security was the fear of losing cattle, and this was primarily a group attitude rather than an individual one. A man living in a town who had sent money to his father to buy cattle, and who heard that they had died, very often shrugged his shoulders when he heard of the loss and

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[1] The Ngoni in Blantyre put about half of their savings into banks and sent the rest to their home villages to buy cattle.

grave with the little shelf at one side, the corpse wrapped in a cow-skin, 764
the *nasso* and *nyongo* on the neck and forehead, the bent legs and upright sitting position facing south-east, and washing the face of the corpse at the grave side with a bunch of grass. On this occasion the Ngoni form of 764
burial was followed by the Christian burial service after the grave had 797
been filled in. During the digging of the grave hymns set to the tunes of Ngoni war songs were sung by the onlookers until the body was brought 778
out of the house. After that there was complete silence while the corpse was lowered into the grave and the grave was filled up, until the service began. This combination of Christian and Ngoni ritual I witnessed many times. One of the missions set its face against the use of the cow-skin and declared that no Christian could be buried except in a coffin, but even this was sometimes disregarded and the full Ngoni ritual was carried out, followed by a Christian service.

After the body had been put in the grave and when the first calling 769
back of the spirit from the bush had reminded the living that they had to care for this new spirit, a series of further duties faced them. These have been referred to as the first and second shaving. The first shaving we shall consider later as a necessary purification before eating the [783]
meat of the funeral rites which brought back the spirit right into the village. The second shaving, which took place from six to twelve months after the funeral, was the prelude to the time when the new ancestral spirit came, or was brought back, to its final lodging. The importance of this last rite was emphasized by Lopati Nzunga in his account of the ritual which took place at the tomb put up to the memory of Gomani I (see p. 165) When the building of the tomb under the supervision of Ngoni in the area was finished, many leading Ngoni from all parts, including those from the towns, gathered there for two days. Every morning before dawn they went up the forest paths singing war songs, as they did later at the time of the death of Bambo Manga, to call back the spirit from the bush where it had spent some thirty years. After a Christian service held by the tomb, the Ngoni *alumuzana* 'brought back' the spirit to Lizulu, Gomani I's village, to the house of NaMagagula his big wife. She was a Christian, so could not take the care of the spirit in her hut, but another of the widows of Gomani I, NaNsambi, who was in the house of NaMagagula, was chosen as guardian. Earlier in the proceedings, when they had decided that the tomb was going to be built, a diviner was consulted, the spirits were addressed in the kraal, the cattle showed that they agreed, and a beast from the herd of the house of NaMagagula was sacrificed and the meat offered to the ancestral spirits of the Maseko Paramounts. Then they built a new hut for NaNsambi and put in it new sacrificial vessels. When the spirit of Gomani I was finally brought home it was to this hut and guardianship that it came. They were uncertain about what had happened to the spirit in the thirty years interval and it did not seem advisable to probe

431

769 in three age groups on the verandah also came forward and, led by
782 NaNkolosna, a widow of Njolomole I, thanked in the women's language,
561 '*Zimata, zaithwa matumo twahosi.*'

I did not witness any ritual sacrifices in the northern kingdom but
769 the accounts given me by informants corresponded closely with the
782 ritual in Mcakhatha just described. When sacrificing for rain to the spirits of the Paramount, a black ox with no white spot was driven into
[825] the kraal in the late afternoon and the chosen spokesman addressed the ancestral spirits of the Jere clan telling them that this was their beast, they must eat the meat and tell UMkulumqango that the people needed rain. While this man prayed to the spirits he stood facing the beast, and everyone else sat looking in front of them and keeping very quiet. The women stayed at home in their huts and the Paramount stayed in his hut 'as if mourning'. When the beast urinated and showed that the spirits had heard, a messenger came and informed the Paramount. The beast was killed early the next morning in the kraal. While the flaying took place, all the huts of the chief wives were smeared with dried cow-dung on the floors and on the smooth place outside the doors. The meat, in two parts, was taken into the *indlunkulu* and left there all night at the back, so that the spirits might lick it. The next morning the meat was cooked in the kraal by the *madoda* and when it was ready they reported to the big *induna*. He called all the people into the kraal and divided them into companies according to their sections and head villages. The meat was given to the head of each head village who divided it among his group. When everyone had finished, one of the leading men stood up and began to praise the spirit using his titles and praise-names (*izitakazo*). The rest stood up and shouted *Bayete*. They then began to dance a war-dance but, the informants added, that was soon stopped by torrents of rain.

114 These chapters on the Ngoni ancestor cult bring to an end this study
178 of the two Ngoni kingdoms in Nyasaland in the 1930's. We have seen how their distinctiveness as a people depended on the culture which they brought with them from the south and how this culture was found among the families of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In the topics included in the three sections of this book: the political system, the social organization, and the ancestor cult, the main features of Ngoni culture are most clearly seen. In much of their economic and agricultural life there was little to distinguish them from their neighbours among the other Nyasaland peoples. The changes brought about by the missions, the schools, new forms of local government, and new types of occupation, were all tending to make the Ngoni less distinctive as a people. The conversion of some leading Ngoni to Christianity, as suggested in Chapter V of Part II, and the spread of schools were together the most powerful influences in altering Ngoni traditional culture. The

organisation of houses built on polygynous marriage, the ancestor cult, and other aspects of Ngoni culture, were profoundly affected by the teaching of Christianity and by the ideas and practices expected of adherents of the churches. Some leading Ngoni Christians like Cibambo attempted to make a synthesis between their past and their present, between traditional culture and modern life. Others said 'All is finished now.'

Two points which clearly emerged from a study of the Ngoni in the 1930's might indicate that the Ngoni as a distinct people were not 'finished'. One was their tenacity in adhering to certain traditional practices; the other was the ability they had shown in adapting their culture and political system to the mixed populations in their kingdoms.

648 Africa. All males had to pay taxes to the government, at
177 first in kind and later in cash, thus hastening the advent of a
[651] money economy. Most drastic of all the changes was the ban
[436] on warfare, which cut at the roots of Ngoni political organi-
[721] zation, and at their system of training their young men.

[182] In the Northern Ngoni kingdom, the Scottish Mission
797 preceded the administration by more than twenty years, and
648 were largely responsible for a peaceful take-over of the area.
In the Central kingdom there was a brief war of resistance,
184 in which the Ngoni armies were dispersed and the Paramount killed on his way to trial. In this area mission activity, under several missions, never achieved, especially in education, the ascendancy which the Scottish Mission achieved among the Ngoni in the North.

178 As one result of the cessation of warfare, and of school
434 education leading to paid employment, there was an econo-
556 mic redistribution of wealth among the Ngoni. Formerly
wealth had been associated with political power, and the
[661] Paramounts and their subordinate chiefs and heads of clans
had command of large herds of cattle, received the spoils from wars and raids, and used the labour of conquered villages to cultivate the land. After the missions and govern-
[871] ment were established, men with schooling began to earn
money as teachers, clerks and mechanics, and so to command financial resources which were not available to the traditional
[464] leaders. The young men responded to the labour recruitment
which became a permanent feature in Nyasaland from the 1890s, and they went far afield to many types of work.

It was evident, just before World War II, that the Ngoni
178 kingdoms had had a profound shock from which they never
194 fully recovered, in spite of the recognition of their Para-
561 mount Chiefs by the Native Authorities Ordinance in 1934.
[648] The older men looked back with nostalgia to what they
called 'the time of peace, when the Europeans were not here to trouble us'. These older men were known as 'the generation of former days', because they had taken part in warfare

as young men, and had known the independence and 178
supremacy of the Ngoni kingdoms. The expression 'everything 184
is finished now' was often on their lips, especially when 561
faced by new demands from the government, or by rebellious
attitudes from their former subject peoples.

'The middle generation' was the term applied to the men
who had as children known the Ngoni kingdoms in their
prime. Though they had never fought as warriors nor been
enrolled in an age-regiment, some of them had gone to the
wars as young boys, carrying the gear for their older brothers.
Many of these men, especially in the North, came under the [797]
influence of the missions, and became teachers, clerks, ministers [463]
and hospital assistants, married Christian wives and
brought up their children in Christian, but Ngoni Christian,
families. These men never lost their attachment to the Ngoni [183]
way of living, and many of them had made a successful
synthesis of the old and the new ways. They stood, as they [156]
said, 'between' the generations, for they knew and understood
both sides of an immensely different way of living and
standard of values. Their children were 'the generation of
today', who had no personal experience of past Ngoni
ascendancy, and who took mission schooling and working
for wages as a normal feature of their life.

When I lived in Ngoni villages, such as those described 178
briefly in this chapter, Ngoni values and attitudes dominated 829
social relationships. There was a determined struggle
on the part of all responsible for child training to inculcate 177
these Ngoni ideas and ways of living. The senior men and [861]
women were aware of the constant and increasing infiltration
into their way of living of ideas, attitudes and behaviour
coming from other ethnic groups in their midst. In
addition their culture was being undermined by European
influences in the schools, in the money economy, and from
modern political developments, emphasizing an all-Nyasaland [186]
sentiment rather than loyalties based on ethnic grouping.
Ngoni pride of race, and a consciousness that they had a

178 culture worth preserving, inspired them to put up a fight
829 against all that threatened the values inherent in their way
177 of living. It was perhaps the struggle of a disappearing
aristocracy. But Ngoni fathers thought that the principles
of education on which they brought up their children were
worth a struggle.

881 of 'staying together', they did not make the occasion of physical maturity an opportunity for driving home the lesson. According to Ngoni tradition the forms of private ritual for girls and for boys had come with them from the [173] south. At one point in their wanderings, said to be in Tanganyika before they settled in Nyasaland, they gave up the practice of circumcision, also brought from the south. This rite, according to tradition, had coincided with boys passing out from herding cattle and being called up into a regiment.

The question naturally arises why the Ngoni adhered to 178 their private ritual at puberty, and never adopted any of the 881 local forms of initation schools, and why they abandoned their only corporate ritual of this type: the circumcision school. Various reasons were given by the Ngoni elders for abandoning the circumcision ritual: that there were no more grass to be found of the sharp kind with which the foreskin was cut; that the school which lasted three to four months delayed for too long the intake of young men into the army; and that the young men of non-Ngoni families, compulsorily absorbed into the army, objected strongly to being circumcised.

After a short description of the private ritual for girls and boys, we will return to answer the question why the Ngoni held to these forms.

Girls' private ritual

881 When a Ngoni girl found she was menstruating for the first time, she stayed in the hut where she was sleeping and called her companion or her friend and told her what was taking place. Ngoni women declared that their girls were as a rule unprepared, and that the flow of blood was unexpected and alarming. Some Ngoni girls agreed that this was true. The majority said, 'We knew about this from our older sisters and companions, but we hid this knowledge from the elders.' The companion or friend found a senior helper in the grandmother's household, generally the one who had supervised the

INTRODUCTION

MARRIAGE among the Ngoni is much the same as anywhere else. 581
It establishes a relationship between a man and a woman,
regulates their sexual activities, locates their children in the
kinship system and influences the inheritance of their property.
These general features, however, do no more than define and identify
marriage, and distinguish marriage from concubinage. Our task 121
is to analyse the particular features that distinguish Ngoni marriage
from other marriage systems and to relate marriage to other institutions
and social processes in Ngoni society.

In Ngoni history there has always been marriage. Indeed men and 581
women look back longingly to a past when people married properly 183
and decorously, and when adulterers were killed, and bemoan the
promiscuity of the present when no woman's fidelity is certain.
Yet even now old people still expect their juniors to marry and their
expectations are fulfilled. Adults are assumed to be married, and
the assumption is justified.

Marriage is seen by the Ngoni as part of the natural order.
Unmarried adults cannot fill important roles and are regarded as [589]
overgrown children whose anomalous condition must be explained
by reference to a malady or a physical or moral defect. Yet despite
the universal and permanent character of marriage as an Ngoni
institution there have been, in the course of the hundred and thirty
years which constitute Ngoni history, great changes in the procedures [178]
and implications of marriage and in its relations to other aspects
of the social life of which it is a part. These changes have been
paralleled in other Ngoni institutions, in law, in local organization,
in religion and above all in political structure. In this paper we 121
shall attempt to contrast the institution of marriage as seen at two
stages in Ngoni history and to relate it to the general plan of social
life at these two periods. We shall also discuss some of the processes
of change that have brought about the differences we observe and
which to some extent are still at work in contemporary Ngoni society.

It is convenient to compare marriage as it was during the 1890's 124
and as it is at the present day. The information relating to the 121
earlier period is contained only to a slight extent in contemporary [129]
documents,[1] and consists largely in the recollections of older men and
women as recorded by a number of writers from 1914 onwards. The

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[1] The most important of these are Wiese's articles, 'Expedicao portugueza a M'Peséne (1889)', in *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa*, x (1891) pp. 235-73, 331-430, 465-97, and xi (1892) pp. 373-599. (All page references cited are from Vol. X); and 'Beitrage zür Geschichte der Zulu im Norden des Zambesi, namentlich der Angoni,' *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xxxii (1900), pp. 181-200.

174 information is insufficient for any reconstruction in great detail, but
121 the general principles are clear and to some extent our conclusions
can be checked by reference to material from other areas, particularly
the nineteenth century accounts of the Ngoni of Northern Nyasaland
[114] and the Zulu. The account of present-day marriage is based on
information collected in the field during 1946-9.[1]

The period of the 1890's is chosen for comparison with the present
648 because of the catastrophic change in Ngoni life which occurred in
178 1898 when they were defeated by the British. Old people who were
alive during the period are still available for questioning and many
[115] younger people have been told of those times by their parents and
grandparents. Although Ngoni cannot generally remember beyond
their grandparents, genealogies collected now yield some information
[129] about the 1890's and link that period to the present. Important
178 social changes occurred in 1898, changes which for the greater part
were, and still are, regretted by the Ngoni, and these accentuate the
difference between time present and time past. The past is
186 recollected and recounted and has a moral value. Children are
taught the glories of the past to compensate them for the inadequacies
814 of the present. The teaching of tribal history as a school subject
reinforces this view. With the passage of time the past has been
idealized and simplified but the picture is still clear enough for us to
be able to distinguish probable fact from unlikely rationalization.
Marriage in 'the time of peace', as the period prior to 1898 is called,
is one aspect of this picture.

128 Marriage is one part of kinship, for it is by the twin processes of
[581] marriage and childbirth that the web of kinship is spun. For the
purposes of our analysis we have had to sever marriage from its
context in what may appear at times rather an arbitrary fashion.
A society is a whole, if not always a well integrated whole, and no
one part of it can be fully understood without a simultaneous
knowledge of all its other parts. Societies persist, more or less,
through time, and it is clear that we cannot hope to grasp the total
significance of the working of a society at any one time without a
knowledge of the changes or lack of change in that society both before
and after. Yet we cannot marshal all these relationships simultaneously, let alone present them through the medium of words.
Our attempt to comprehend the present cannot wait until we have
full knowledge of the future, and our analysis of one sector of a
system must proceed in advance of our synthesis of the whole.
Ngoni society has persisted through the last sixty years rather less
[182] than more, and it may well be argued that present-day Ngoni
society is poorly integrated. Nevertheless it is to be hoped that
121 an analysis of Ngoni marriage may, on the one hand, demonstrate

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[1] I made two visits to the Fort Jameson Ngoni while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, spending in all a year and eight months there. I was assisted by my clerk, Mr. M. B. Lukhero, in inquiring into former conditions as well as observing contemporary social life.

631 Succession to office within this system was from a man to his
428 eldest son by his great wife. A man inherited from his father not
only his father's dependents but also his father's political superiors.
The segments of the system, although some of them had special
names, could all be referred to by the name of the person in charge
of each segment. The heir succeeded to the name of his father and
to responsibility for the segment named after his father. New
641 people came into the system in two ways: by birth and by capture.
[729] Captives were placed in the system by decree of the Paramount
Chief and his regional governors. The function of marriage was,
[581] in this context, to locate children in the system unambiguously and
uniquely.

571 Two systems of relationships set up ties which cut across the lines
of the residential system. These were the military regimental
system of age-sets and the bilateral kinship system. In this paper
121 we shall be concerned only incidentally with the regimental system,
in so far as it directly affected marriage. We are, however, concerned
with the kinship system, and in particular with the relationship
of husband and wife. By careful choice of wives for himself and his
581 sons a man ensured that his own group of agnates was linked to
602 many other agnatic groups by bonds of affinity and, in the next
generation, of matrilateral kinship.

It is from this point of view that we can best approach the analysis
of marriage as it was in 'the time of peace'. Marriage arrangements
[182] then worked in conjunction with the residential system which is
[178] now in decay and it is not surprising that the replacement of the
old system by a new one has been accompanied by changes in the
kinds of marriage entered into by Ngoni men and women.

2. *Fidelity and fertility*

171 The old Ngoni residential system had much in common with the
Zulu and Swazi systems and there was much in common in the realm
581 of marriage. Marriage involved a permanent transfer of the fertility
613 of the woman to the man's group. The children of a man's wife
fell entirely within his own segment of the system, so that political
602 ties became coincident with lineage ties. But while marriage secured
for a man legitimate descendents with whom to people his own
segment, it also established ties of affection and obligation which
cut across the cleavage lines of the residential system. A man and
his affines were linked in a specific relationship, entailing definite
rights in division in the marriage, validated by the transfer of cattle
and made permanent by the birth of children. The rites of marriage
affirmed the transfer of the woman's fertility, the agnatic affiliation
of her children, and the rights and obligations of affines towards one
another. This pattern is common to many peoples organized
588 patrilineally. Nevertheless, some of the characteristics of highly
developed agnatic systems, such as ghost marriage, the marriage
of wives by a woman, and the marriage of a queen with cattle
contributed by the whole nation, were not found among
the Ngoni.

The recent captives

855 sent their children to one of the senior wives of their captor. Husband, 593 wife, and unweaned child slept together in the same hut, but their waking lives were spent in association with other and different groups of people.

In view of what has happened in modern times, we must draw 631 attention to two features of the residential system which were not, 554 at that time, directly related to the processes of marriage. A man 571 lived where he belonged politically, and the residential system was an integral part of the political organization of the state. A man's place in it was determined by birth, and could not be altered except by the intervention of his political superiors. He could not change his political affiliation merely by going to live in another village or division or cluster, while if he received political promotion, or if his segment was punished by the State, the change of status was sometimes accompanied by change of residence. Secondly, choice within the system was expressed by hiving-off, not by moving about. The variable factor within any segment was the extent to which the potential cleavages within it were made actual cleavages. A man decided whether he would continue to live in the same cluster or division as his elder brother and depend on the common herd, or whether he would establish his own cluster with its own herd and own spatial identity. He did not have to decide whether he would continue to attach himself to one lieutenant or royal headquarters or whether he would transfer his allegiance to another. In this he had no choice. Choice lay in the extent of segmentation, not in the location of allegiance. We shall see that changes in these features [178] in the residential system have in recent times been related to changes in marriage.

Marriage in 'the time of peace' was essentially a means by which 581 agnatic segments, unable by the fact of exogamy to produce their 613 own children, were provided with child-bearers from outside the segment. A woman was associated as a child-bearer with a definite point in her husband's agnatic segment, and this association was permanent. The biological determinants of child-rearing strengthened the permanence of the association. To bear a child for her husband's agnatic segment, in any system of this general type, a woman must be associated with it for three years or more, from conception to weaning; and as one child is weaned, the next is on the way. One man can beget children for his agnatic line by many wives at the same time, but a woman can produce for only one husband at a time. Thus while it is possible to maintain stable exogamous matrilineal groupings without fixing permanently the [582] reproductive powers of men, agnatic exogamous groupings, if they are to persist in time, must be supplied with permanent sources of fertility from outside. The old Ngoni marriage system did this. [178] We shall see that nowadays both the permanent transfer of fertility and the persisting agnatic groupings have disappeared.

CHAPTER II

PROCESSES OF CHANGE

1. *White conquest*

THE SOCIAL system which we have so far described flourished in 648
an environment in which the Ngoni people were separated
from other tribes by a no-man's-land. Ngoni raiding parties [724]
crossed this tract and returned with captives, food and some cattle.
The only other contacts with the outside world were with Arab
slave-traders and their agents who exchanged slaves and ivory [439]
for cloth and guns, and with a few white and half-caste traders
and explorers. In 1898 the Ngoni army was defeated by a force
under British leadership and many villages were burnt down. Very 648
many of the cattle were looted and the people dispersed. A White 177
township was built in the middle of the Ngoni kingdom, the warriors
were disarmed, and an administrative system was established
involving both Whites and Ngoni. Missionaries arrived, schools [799]
were opened, labour recruiters and later tobacco planters began their
activities.

We are not concerned here with the total effect of this sequence [121]
of events but only with the results it has had on marriage. We
can distinguish a number of fields in which processes initially external
to the indigenous society began to impinge on it and to become [178]
part of it. The establishment of White control brought to an end
the Ngoni wars. The building up of the Cewa chieftainships
contiguous to Ngoni country affected the whole scheme of values held
by Ngoni people at the same time as those values were being altered
by the intrusion of White technology, political offices, legal concepts,
and religions. The physical dispersion of the people in the face of
the British troops was followed by a greater dispersion of men, and
later of women and children as well, over the mining centres of
Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt. 178

The large villages which formed the core of the residential system [361]
were burnt, and their inhabitants never all came together again.
At first people lived in small settlements of three or four grass shacks
built in the hills or in the bush. Gradually the people gathered
together in distinct villages, but their population was different in
structure from that of the former villages. The groupings of people
which stayed together after 1898 represented the smallest fragments [621]
of the residential system, and these small fragments collected together
into larger associations which were related to, but by no means
coincident with, the larger segments of the old system. Some [571]
segments left the area and rejoined the tribes from whence they

N 178 came. Others followed maternal links or were attracted to the
591 district messengers, the newly-created political agents of the White
N Administration. About 1912 the Administration adopted a policy
[648] of decreasing the number of distinct villages and effected amalgamations
between villages which had nothing at all in common
except spatial proximity. Later still, from about 1920 onwards,
N new immigrants began to enter the area from the surrounding Cewa
[167] tribe in the face of alienation of land to Whites.

These villages became the basic local administrative units. Men
N 178 were identified in terms of their tribe, their chief, and their village.
To this extent the new village inherited the political functions of
621 the old. But men, instead of being fixed in their allegiance, moved
641 from village to village seeking good land for their gardens and freedom
from quarrels. The proliferation of villages was to some extent
controlled by the Administration, so that if a man quarrelled with
his elder brother he could no longer easily set up a village of his own.
Instead he sought refuge with his maternal or affinal kin, registered
himself in their village, and became for some purposes at least
subordinate to the headman of that village. A man's political
position was determined by where he had decided to live, whereas
N under the old system he had had to live where he belonged politically.
[602] The whole nature of affinal and maternal ties shifted so that in some
instances they became more important than the ties of paternal
kinship.

N
2. *Rival tribes*

648 The values of Ngoni life were in the old days held in conscious
opposition to those of the tribes with whom they fought. All
177 the later captives came from matrilineal uxorilocal tribes, who made
only token transfers at marriage, and who married at an earlier age
than did the military Ngoni. They did not take so severe a view of
adultery, and for girls copulation at puberty was obligatory. Captives
who had been brought up in this tradition were in the old days
forcibly required to adopt the Ngoni way of life, and indeed it seems
likely that to some extent they did so willingly as part of the process
N by which they transferred themselves in allegiance from one group
[182] to the other. After 1898 the central government of the Ngoni lost
much of its power and it was no longer able to enforce conformity to
Ngoni standards. Ngoni marriage payments had been made in
N cattle, and the looting of cattle made it more difficult to maintain
M these payments. The example provided by the adjacent Cewa
167 chiefdoms reinforced the tendency to depart from the modes of
177 behaviour of the past. Furthermore, groups of Cewa entered Ngoni
country after 1898, as we have already noted, and these people had
N never been indoctrinated with Ngoni beliefs and values. In addition,
M many individuals followed their captured relatives and joined them
[621] where they were living in Ngoni country. To-day some villages,
although under Ngoni chiefs, have matrilineal succession, dance

one instance where the woman ran off with the man called in by her 842 sterile husband. 837

4. *The legal relationship*

Emphasis on sexual partnership is characteristic of the beginning 593 of marriage. Young people are 'foolish', dance all night long and sleep late in the morning. With the arrival of children, man and wife emerge from the tutelage of their elders and non-sexual aspects [851] of their marriage relationship gain in importance. Even then the importance of sexual satisfaction is not forgotten. People say openly of a woman who obstructs her husband when he seeks a second wife, 'She is too fond of his penis', and old widows explain their failure to remarry by saying 'Our joints are too stiff to copulate'.

Nevertheless at all times there is a great deal more in Ngoni marriage than mere sexual partnership. The obligations and duties of husband and wife towards each other and each other's kin are determined by the marriage payments and ratified by the ceremonies of marriage. These obligations persist despite the fluctuations of sexual attraction. We have seen that in 'the time 583 of peace' the two principal transfers were 'snuff-box' and bridewealth. Today the position is different and the rights transferred by the 178 marriage payments are different. For simplicity we may discuss the latter payment first. Bridewealth is still recognized but, as can be seen from Table V, is paid in only about four per cent of all marriages. It consists of a payment of one or more beasts or £6 made by the man to his wife's father.[16] If only one cow is offered and it dies before calving, it must be replaced. Some indication of the range of variation in amounts paid is given by Table VI.

This sample of only twelve payments is very small, but there is some indication that the amount paid has decreased in recent years. This is of interest in view of the general rise in the standard of wealth and in the amount offered as legalization payment.

By the payment of bridewealth a man ensures that all the children of his wife, by whatever genitor, shall, or rather ought to, belong to [851] his group of relatives and live in his village when they grow up. The payment is made only after several children have been born. In the old days, if this payment was made, the children were legitimate and lived in their father's segment, and if it was not paid they could be claimed by their mother's father's segment. In these days there is no such hard and fast rule. Everyone has in effect a large choice of places where he can live, and the payment or non-payment of bridewealth for his mother is only one factor operating with many others in influencing his decisions. It is not surprising that so few people pay bridewealth.

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[16] For comparative figures for the Ngoni of Southern Nyasaland, see Read, 'Native standards of living and African cultural change', *Africa* xi (1938), 3, supplement, p. 23.

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Bridewealth is not often returned. A man does not usually consider offering the payment until he is fairly sure that his marriage is a stable and happy one, with little likelihood of divorce. Divorce is more the time for paying bridewealth than for taking it back. If a man has had children by a wife whom he later divorces, then,

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Table V. Incidence of bridewealth, by decades

Bridewealth	Date of marriage									Total
	1878–87	1888–97	1898–1907	1908–17	1918–27	1928–37	1938–47	1948–49	Not known	
Offered and accepted ..	–	1	2	2	3	2	2	–	–	12
Offered but refused ..	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Not offered ..	1	12	26	53	61	56	113	17	8	347
Total	1	13	28	56	64	58	115	17	8	360
Ratio of offers to total number	0%	8%	7%	5%	5%	3%	2%	0%	—	4%
Not known if offer was made or accepted ..	1	3	6	6	12	11	18	7	2	66
Grand total ..	2	16	34	62	76	69	133	24	10	426

Informants as in Table VIII

Table VI. Magnitude of bridewealth, by decades

Amount paid	Date of marriage								Total
	1878–87	1888–97	1898–1907	1908–17	1918–27	1928–37	1938–47	1948–9	
Beasts: 1 ..	—	—	—	1	1	2	1	—	5
2 ..	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
3 ..	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	2
6 ..	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
8 ..	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
£6 ..	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	2
Total ..	0	1	2	2	3	2	2	0	12

Informants as in Table VIII

583 The third payment we have to consider in modern marriage is 'snuff-box', and this nowadays is not important. The word is used in two senses. It may be an alternative name for the legaliza-

Table VII. Magnitude of legalization payment, by decades

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Amount paid	Date of marriage									Total
	1878–87	1888–97	1898–1907	1908–17	1918–27	1928–37	1938–47	1948–9	Not known	
Beads	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	2
Cloth	—	1	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	9
A chicken	—	1	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	6
Sheep:										
1	—	—	—	2	1	1	—	—	—	4
3	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Goats:										
1	—	—	—	9	6	3	1	—	—	19
2	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	3
A beast	—	2	—	3	1	3	2	—	—	11
Total non-monetary payments	0	4	7	24	9	8	3	0	0	55
1*s.*	—	—	1	2	1	—	1	—	—	5
2*s.*	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	3
2*s.* 6*d.*	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	3
3*s.*	—	—	—	1	2	—	1	—	—	4
4*s.*	—	—	—	—	3	—	2	—	—	5
5*s.*	—	—	2	1	4	2	2	—	—	11
6*s.*	—	—	—	1	2	2	—	—	—	5
7*s.*	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
7*s.* 6*d.*	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
9*s.*	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2
10*s.*	—	—	1	2	5	4	8	—	1	21
12*s.*	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	2
15*s.*	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
£1	—	—	1	—	2	2	4	—	1	10
£1. 10*s.*	—	—	1	1	1	4	49	8	—	64
£2	—	—	—	1	—	1	5	—	—	7
£2. 5*s.*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
£3	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	3	—	5
£3. 10*s.*	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	3

£4	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	2
£5	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
£6	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	2
Total monetary payments	0	0	8	10	24	21	80	13	3	159
Unknown	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
Grand total	1	4	15	34	33	30	83	13	3	216
Median value of monetary payments	—	—	5s.	8s.	6s.	10s.	£1.10s.	£1.10s.	—	£1.10s.
Arithmetic means	—	—	9s. 6d.	12s.	13s.	20s.	29s.6d.	41s.	14s.	24s.6d.

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Informants as in Table VIII

tion payment, where the payment is made in kind, that is, one beast, 583
and not in money. This is a straightforward continuation of the old usage, for we have seen that it was by the payment of 'snuff-box', consisting of one beast, that a man established his exclusive sexual rights over his wife. Nowadays few people offer a beast as legalization payment. The word can be used in another sense to indicate any small present made by the man to the wife's father at the beginning of the marriage negotiations, as an indication that he intends to make the proper and more substantial legalization payment later on. A present of this kind is not recoverable, and consists of a shilling, a half-crown, a chicken, tobacco or a cloth. It conveys no rights at all.[18]

The legalization payment by no means completely transfers 583
the woman to her husband's group. Her kinsfolk retain an active 593
interest in her welfare, and are her refuge from her husband's wrath. They intervene to preserve the marriage when otherwise it would end in hatred and divorce. The husband must see that they are formally told whenever his wife becomes pregnant, and if she dies

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[18] These small presents are also called *camulomo*, or *cavulamulomo*, literally in Nsenga, 'the thing of opening a lip'.

583 in childbirth the husband is held to be responsible at least in part.
593 He must pay one cow[19] to the dead woman's kin to appease them. It is said that if bridewealth has been paid the man need not pay another beast, but that the woman's relatives would take a beast from the bridewealth and kill that in order to mourn their kinswoman.

593 The separation of interest that continues even after a marriage has been contracted is demonstrated by the payments which husband and wife are required to make to each other. Although they use many things in common, their possessions are thought of as belonging either to the one or the other. A man may own chickens, although his wife looks after them for him, while a woman may own a beast and let her husband care for it. If husband and wife quarrel the one who apologizes may offer a chicken to the other to make peace. These payments are in part enforced by public opinion

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Table VIII. Incidence of legalization payment, by decades

Legalization payment	Date of marriage									Total
	1878–87	1888–97	1898–1907	1908–17	1918–27	1928–37	1938–47	1948–9	Not known	
Offered and accepted ..	1	4	15	34	33	30	83	13	3	216
Offered but refused	–	–	–	1	–	1	3	–	–	5
Not offered ..	–	9	12	21	29	27	30	3	4	135
Total	1	13	27	56	62	58	116	16	7	356
Ratio of offers to total number ..	100%	31%	56%	63%	53%	53%	74%	81%	—	62%
Not known if offer was made or accepted ..	1	3	7	6	14	11	17	8	3	70
Grand total ..	2	16	34	62	76	69	133	24	10	426

124 Informants

	Used	Potential	% Used
Men	122	135	90·4
Women	232	251	92·4
Total	354	386	91·7

Number of marriages in which both partners were informants 122

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[19] Called *mulumo*, from the Nsenga verb, *ku-luma*, to bite or chew. The corresponding payment among the Cewa is said to be called *mtupa* or *nthupa*. Cf. Young, op. cit., p. 62.

159 593 586 badly that she had had to go to hospital. She produced a letter from the White doctor by way of evidence. Ruth's father testified that Ruth was the first wife Zachariah had married, yet despite this he fought her and did not fight with his second wife Naomi. Ruth asked the court to divorce her as she feared she would be killed by Zachariah. A court councillor said that although she and her husband had been to the court before with their troubles, it was not the work of the court to force men and women to divorce one another but to instruct them how to live together in peace. Zachariah was ordered to pay two pounds damages to Ruth and ten shillings fine to the court. Zachariah agreed to pay the fine but refused to pay the damages. The chief, who was in court at the time, asked him if he said this because of his royal descent-name. If Zachariah persisted in his attitude the chief would write to his employer and tell him to deduct the money from his wages. Zachariah then said he would send a boy back to collect the two pounds from his village.

Ruth went to her own village. About this time Zachariah was transferred to another area, distant from Ruth's village. In November Ruth's father began to complain that the two pounds had not yet been paid and said that Zachariah was trying to trap his wife by not visiting her, hoping she would commit adultery.

In February 1948 Ruth took out a summons against Zachariah for failing to come and visit her despite the ruling of the court in October that they were not to be divorced. The summons was sent to Zachariah in another county and Zachariah wrote back to a court councillor to say that he would not come to court as he had heard that Ruth was committing adultery with a certain man. On receiving the letter the chief said nothing could be done about it until Zachariah decided to bring an action for adultery against Ruth.

By this time Zachariah had acquired another wife and when in March he was given leave he took the new wife to his own village where his second wife Naomi had been living all the time.

In December 1948 Ruth brought an action against Zachariah for divorce on the ground of his desertion. Three times the case was down for hearing but Zachariah never appeared. The court then divorced Ruth with no damages to pay.

Hearing this Zachariah went to the District Officer and asked why his wife had been divorced without his knowledge. The District Officer referred him to the chief. Zachariah wrote a rather facetious letter to the chief challenging his right to divorce Ruth. The court clerk read the letter and said that Zachariah ought to be fined for insulting the chief. He observed that Ruth's mother had died in September and that Zachariah must be a cruel man as he had not gone to offer his condolences.

586 It is easier for a woman to prove desertion in a case like this where the man is living in the rural area, than when he is away in the town working and writes sporadically if at all. The court feels that it is under an obligation to the migrant labourers of the tribe not to divorce their wives too easily. But if a husband is in the area and could perfectly easily go and see his wife, it is much easier to demonstrate that the desertion is deliberate and sustained, and not merely forced on a man by the exigencies of earning a living.

586 178 We have seen that the two main grounds for divorce are adultery and desertion. Some Whites express this by saying that these are the main causes of divorce among the Ngoni and other tribes. The Ngoni do not see the matter in this light. The cause of divorce to them is the presence of the White group. Old men deplore the

apparent ease with which women get divorces and councillors say that they divorce people only because the Administration would interfere if they did not. We can see that in one sense the Ngoni analysis is correct. Whatever may be the precipitating causes of particular divorces, one basic factor is that the old social order in which divorce was rare has been replaced, through a series of events beginning with the White conquest, by a different form of social structure in which wives are relatively mobile from one husband to another. Adultery and desertion lead to divorce because it is no longer necessary to tie down the fertility of women to definite points in a segmentary system based on patrilineal descent, and this is so because the system no longer exists. It is true that the Roman Catholic and Anglican Missions do not recognize divorce but ecclesiastical ceremonies have no force in law, either in the eyes of the Administration or of the Native Courts, and the sanctions utilized by these missions do not entirely prevent their members seeking divorce. 586 198

Immediately after a divorce the couple usually wish to have little to do with one another. After the passage of years the hostility between them fades away and they may talk to one another in the ordinary course of village life. They continue to address each other as *husband* and *wife* and their children, although nominally in the custody of one group or the other continue to visit back and forth and keep the parents informed of each other's doings. A woman now married elsewhere may return to her former husband when their son comes home on leave from work. In her old age a woman may even go back to the man from whom she was divorced a long time ago if she has no one else to turn to for shelter and assistance. More frequently she follows her children to where they are living in her former husband's village but has little to do with him directly, only through their children. 586

8. Co-wives 593

We have seen that the rights of a man over his wife's sexual activities are different from hers over his. Whereas a woman who commits adultery pays damages to her husband, he does not pay her when he commits adultery. This lack of symmetry derives from the polygynous nature of the Ngoni marriage system. A man can always argue that he is seeking another wife, even if the woman he is running after is married to someone else. It is considered no business of his wi[illegible] interfere. She may attempt to stop him but all she can use are domestic and mystical sanctions, she cannot appeal to the law. Again, a wife has no right to the sexual monopoly of her husband and cannot prevent him from taking additional wives except by making his life with her so difficult that he decides to abandon the attempt. 595 [684]

As can be seen from Table III, about one man in seven has two or more wives. Although the Christian Missions do not tolerate 595 199

595 polygyny, and punish their members who take additional wives, 794 there are still a number of Christian polygynists who for most purposes align themselves with the Christian group.

As in the old days, the wives of a polygynist are ranked in the 595 chronological order of marriage, the first wife married being the ● 178 great wife. If, however, bridewealth has been paid, the wives married [583] in this way are all senior to those who are married without it. The arrangement by which a barren or aged wife was given a linked co-wife (*nshanzi*) has now almost disappeared. A young girl may still be indicated as a linked co-wife designate at the gall bladder ceremony of her kinswoman and the intestines placed round her neck, but this is now a mere ceremonial, and the girl marries elsewhere when she grows up. As mentioned above a chief negotiated recently for a linked co-wife on the strength of bridewealth paid by his father, but with no success.

593 A man makes his headquarters in his great wife's hut, and keeps his possessions and money in it. During the day it is considered 595 proper that he should sit and chat or entertain visitors on the verandah of her hut. Her hut is likely to be of better design than those of her co-wives, and she is more likely than they to have a separate kitchen. When her husband returns from a journey, he ought to go first to her hut, and if he has brought back goods from Southern Rhodesia, it is in her house that he stores his loads until he has time to divide them among his wives and relatives. A visitor from afar goes first to the great wife's hut and there asks for the man he is seeking. In her husband's absence it is she who must entertain the visitor. This pattern of precedence is followed to greater or lesser extent despite quarrels between husband and wife, and is not affected by where the husband actually sleeps at night.

Apart from this emphasis on the importance of the great wife, the 595 correct behaviour for a man with many wives is impartiality. He must sleep with each wife in rotation, usually for a week at a time, and must not confide in one wife the secrets of his relationship to another. Relationships between co-wives are sometimes strained, and one may use medicines against the others. The medicine[28] [834] believed to prevent a man from achieving erection with anyone other than the woman who gives it to him is sometimes used by one wife against another. On the other hand, some co-wives help each other in their gardens and many polygynists' households run smoothly. Each wife has her own hut and her own garden and it is possible for them to arrange their affairs so that they can co-operate or act separately as they find best. If they persistently quarrel [591] their husband may deem it well for them to live in separate villages, so that for example a man may live virilocally with his great wife and uxorilocally with his second wife, going from one village to the and widows are subject to the same restrictions

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[28] Possibly known as *ndamanga*. The details of this medicine are not known by many men, and I was unable to question any women on this matter.

581 583 [165] and wear the same signs of mourning whether or not their deceased husbands made any payments. The absence of payments does not automatically deny to a man and woman the status of husband and wife any more than the completed payments automatically ensure marital happiness.

583 581 595 As reflected in Table XII, the proportion of marriages in which no payments are offered has decreased in the last twelve years, ans we know from Table VIII that this is due to an increase in the number of marriages in which the legalization payment is made. It is therefore possible in future there will be a clearer division between marriage, with its legalization payment, and concubinage, with no such payment and with a completely different relationship between the sexual partners and between their respective groups of relatives. We are not in this paper concerned specifically with concubinage and prostitution, but it may at this point be useful to point out that not many women are concubines. In our sample, as set out in Table IV, there was only one concubine, a wedded woman, among 223 wedded women. From Table III, we see that there were no men at all, in our sample of 116 wedded men, living with concubines. The paramour of the concubine in our sample was resident on a nearby farm, and so did not come into the sample of men.

4. *Co-operation between affines*

583 585 The payments and ceremonies of marriages are isolated and memorable events. The ceremonies are public in that neighbours

Table XII. Incidence of marriage without payment, by decades

583 178

Marriage payment	Date of marriage									Total
	1878-87	1888-97	1898-1907	1908-17	1918-27	1928-37	1938-47	1948-9	Not known	
At least one payment offered	1	6	17	37	38	34	86	14	5	238
None offered ..	–	7	11	19	26	24	29	3	3	122
Ratio of marriages without offer of payment to total	0%	54%	39%	34%	41%	41%	25%	18%	—	34%
Not known if any payments offered	1	3	6	6	12	11	18	7	2	66
Grand total ..	2	16	34	62	76	69	133	24	10	426

Informants as in Table VIII

[p.105]

CHAPTER V

SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

1. Old and new marriage

WE HAVE described marriage at two periods in Ngoni history, as 581
it was in the 1890's and as it is now. The differences we 178
have found between the two periods are not due to chance except in the sense in which we may speak of all historical incidents as being partly due to chance and partly determined by the limiting conditions imposed by the past. Changes in the field of Ngoni marriage have been paralleled by changes in other aspects of Ngoni social life, have been influenced by other changes and have in turn influenced them. Throughout Ngoni history men and women have always married, but the society in which they married has changed. Marriage in the time of peace was appropriate, more or less, to the general ordering of social life in those days, and modern marriage is appropriate, again more or less, to the social structure of today.

Our task is then a threefold one. We have to show the relationship 121 between old marriage and the rest of the old society, a similar relationship between modern marriage and modern society, and the process by which the transition from one set of conditions to the other has come about. We have outlined in Chapter II some of the internal 128 and external factors responsible for this transition, and the nature of the material available to us on the 1890 period has led us, in Chapter I, to describe the old system largely in analytic terms. In this chapter we shall attempt to clarify our picture of the past in the light of an analysis of modern marriage.

In the old days the residential system provided the framework 591 for political and lineage ties. Marriage was a legitimate means whereby children were recruited into segments of the system. Marriage involved a permanent transfer of fertility from the woman's kin to her husband's kin. Adultery was punishable by death, and divorce was rare. Affinal ties cut across the cleavage lines of the residential system, but while these ties were important, a man could not transfer his allegiance to his wife's or to his mother's group. A man who quarrelled with his kinsmen could not move to another village to live, but could only hive off to form a dependent but recognizable cluster of his own, which still remained part of the same residential segment.

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The material apparatus belonging to the system, that is, the great villages with hundreds of huts and central cattle byres, was to a large 248 extent destroyed in 1898 by the British. A few important people in the system were killed, and many of the cattle looted. With the 128 establishment of British rule, it was physically possible for the 248

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Ngoni to rebuild their old system, yet they did not do so. The social conditions that permitted the old system to operate had disappeared.

The most important new factor was the presence of the Administration in political control of the area and backed by a superior technology. Tribal warfare was no longer possible, so that recruitment into the tribe by capture ceased. Frontiers and land boundaries were established, and free movement across the face of Africa ended. Instead men went off in parties to work in the mines, and either returned or were lost to the tribe. The internal structure of the state was modified by the creation of new posts held by Ngoni and by the actions and exhortations of Administrative officers who did not fully understand the operation of the old system and who were themselves bound by the general plan of Native Administration decided on for the Territory as a whole. The sanctions available to chiefs and headmen were severely curtailed, and in particular they were prevented from killing adulterers. Unrelated groups of neighbours were forced to amalgamate into single villages, while other populated areas were cleared and the land made over to White farmers who began employing labourers from near and far. Cewa captives returned to their old areas while other Cewa entered the area as labourers or seeking places to make their villages. At the same time as these new elements were intruding into the system, mobility within it by traditional processes became more difficult. The old political structure held together because there was provision within it for promotion and demotion, for vertical as well as horizontal social mobility. Successful warriors were rewarded by the chief, and made lieutenants and regional governors. After 1898 this was no longer possible. The chief lost his power to allocate people as dependants to an important or ambitious man, and as it became futile for men to struggle for position within the old system, so they began to struggle outside it, in the Administration, the churches, farms and mines.[1]

These were new phenomena, without structural equivalents in the old order. The most important change was the loss of sovereignty, but this in itself did not directly impinge on the field of marriage. It was no longer possible to divide up the kingdom in terms of the great royal villages under the leadership of senior queens, for the Paramount Chief was a young boy and a Catholic, and by the time he had acquired a number of queens, boundaries had already been drawn and the formation of new villages controlled by the Administration. Royal marriage has ceased to have the political significance that it had in the old days. This is attributable to the confinement of the kingdom within the geographical and administrative bounds of the larger system. But we know from other areas

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[1] Cf. Barnes, 'Some aspects of political development among the Fort Jameson Ngoni', *African Studies*, vii (1948), pp. 100-102, 108-109.

But we know from other areas 121

that loss of sovereignty itself does not necessarily disrupt the marriage arrangements of common people and we must look elsewhere for an explanation.

2. Movement between villages

The old villages formed part of the residential system, and their 621 structure was maintained by the power of the central chieftainship, as expressed through the lieutenants of the royal villages, and by the diffuse sanction of public opinion based on ideas held in common as to the rights conferred by the payment of bridewealth. Nowadays [178] the lieutenants of the royal villages have very much less power, and bridewealth is not often paid. The village is held together by the various ties of kinship and affinity between its members, and to a slight extent by the restriction of movement from one village to another. This control, exercised by the Administration through the [648] system of registration of adult males, is largely ineffective except in the Resettlement Areas.[8] Men and women are more or less free to live wherever they can find relatives, and if they quarrel in one village they can move to another where they hope life will be more pleasant. There is no general rule to which appeal can be made concerning whether a married couple should live uxorilocally or virilocally. Hence a quarrel between man and wife or between affinally related people may lead to a split in the village, and the dissident section may attempt to form a village of its own or attach itself to another village. It is therefore in the interests of the [622] headman that quarrels in his village should be settled as rapidly as possible, and he has therefore an interest in the private lives of his people even though they may not be his close relatives. His interests are represented by his lieutenants and are shared by everyone in the village who wishes his own to be a large prosperous and happy village. The theme of the good and happy village recurs in many [123] of the formal situations of Ngoni life and finds expression in much of local action on a village basis, as for example in the competitive dances, the division of food at a ceremony and the organization of the religious sects.

We find therefore that the headman and his lieutenants participate [622] in the ceremonies of marriage and in marital quarrels. Conversely the headman is brought into relationship with the married couple by the allocation to him of pots of beer whenever there is a general distribution even though he may not be at the ceremony. Other important men and women similarly participate merely because of their common membership of the village. For example, a hoeing party was led by a middle-aged woman who was described as 'an important person' in the son-in-law's village. She was in fact

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[8] Areas which have been reopened to settlement by Ngoni and other tribes since 1941 with various restrictions on agricultural methods and on population. About ten per cent of Ngoni live in Resettlement Areas.

621 related to him but her participation was explained in terms of her status as an 'important person' and not in terms of this relationship.

A man can move from his village to his wife's village if he or she 591 has quarrelled with his kinsfolk, and a quarrel with her relatives may ●178 cause them to move in the reverse direction. These shifts from one kind of residence to another occurred in a different context in the old system. We have seen that there was sometimes a change from uxorilocal to virilocal residence, for at the beginning of his first marriage a man might leave his wife living uxorilocally until he had paid bridewealth. If there was a quarrel between a man and his wife's kin at this stage, they might try to delay his taking the woman to his own village, although they could not entirely prevent him from so doing. Hostility found expression in the desire to keep him under close surveillance, not in the desire to be rid of him. This old idea still persists to some extent, as we have seen in the story of Abner and Esther (p. 79). Esther wanted her husband Abner to live in her village so that her father could see that he looked after her well. A man may refuse to allow his daughter to move to her husband's village until he is satisfied that the young man is a good husband. This line of action, however, now applies only at the beginning of a marriage and in families where a man is determined to maintain his control over his growing children. When there is a quarrel involving a couple who have been married for a long time, it is then too late to hope that a man will improve his behaviour under the eye of his wife's father. If he quarrels with his father-in-law it is better that he should go and live in his own village.

The significance of the reverse move, from virilocality to uxorilocality, was different in the old system from what it is in the new. In the light of what we know of the South-Eastern Bantu and by reference to the present position among the Ngoni it seems probable that in the old days it did happen from time to time that a man sought refuge with his wife's agnates. Yet from the dearth of instances of this in my genealogical material it would seem that this cannot have occurred very often. Once a man had established himself in virilocal residence he usually stayed there. If he quarrelled with his kinsfolk all he could do was to move off and make his own segment distinct from those of his brothers; he could not seek permanent shelter with his wife's kinsfolk. Nowadays he can do so, and it may be easier for him to change to uxorilocal residence than 621 178 to try to form his own group. In the old days the transition from what we now call a cluster to a division or from a division to a village was a gradual one. Spatial separation between minor segments of the same order was initially a matter of yards and with successive moves in the tribal migration became a matter of miles. Nowadays 648 361 there is a definite number of villages recognized by the Administration and a man who establishes his own residential cluster of huts is, or at least was until very recently, in danger of punishment for not living in a recognized village. For many years there was an

Administrative ruling that no new village could be started without 648
a minimum of ten taxpayers, and earlier it was the policy of the 361
Administration to decrease the number of independent villages.
These policies have now changed, and throughout the period there
have always been devices for lessening their effect, but it is still true
that sometimes the easiest way for a man to flee from his kinsmen is 591
to build his hut in his wife's village.

Case history 14

Samuel's father was headman of a village. Samuel[**] married in the
village and had four sons by his wife before she died. His second wife
lived with him virilocally and after she had borne two children she committed
adultery with one of Samuel's elder brothers. Samuel divorced her and
married a third wife who died soon after. Samuel accused his brothers of [154]
killing his first and third wives by sorcery. He married a fourth wife and
went to live in her village, taking with him his four sons by his first wife
and the elder child by his second wife. He is still registered at his father's
village and attends there whenever the District Officer tours the area, but
he has little to do with his brothers.

In this way the movements of men and women between villages 591
reflect the struggles between kinsfolk and between affines. Besides 621
the formation of new villages, which goes on despite obstacles
placed in the way, there is a continual reshuffling of the elements
making up the existing villages. Through marriage a man acquires
affines and through them places where he can live if he wants to do
so. This change in the structure of the village is therefore related
to the new role of villages in the administrative scheme, the new [178]
rules for their formation, and the new kinds of movement from one
village to another. By reason of his marriages the number of moves
that a man can make if need be is increased.

3. Polygyny

The other important structural change that has been directly 595
related to external influences is the decreased incidence of polygyny. 178
In the old days a man acquired dependants in two ways, by begetting
them and by capturing them. Wealth consisted of cattle and
dependants, and the well-remembered names of the past are those [556]
of patriarchs with dozens of wives whose offspring now form the
core of many villages. Nowadays the missions oppose polygyny,
wealth can be acquired in other ways than by the marriage of
daughters, and a variety of relatives with different genealogical ties
can be gathered round one as dependants. It is rare to find a man
with as many as five wives. With the decline in polygyny the [554]
system of ranking that was used to organise large compound
households has fallen into decay, and except when the issue has been [592]
complicated by the payment of bridewealth, wives are simply ranked
in chronological order of marriage. With the increased importance

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[**] See genealogy, p. 81.

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595 of maternal ties, the cleavage between sets of father's children is an
178 expression more of their different matrilateral affiliations than of
N the different status of their mothers. A child will be sent to its
855 own mother's mother rather than to its father's wife's mother,
although some children do go to the latter. Samuel's children by
his first and third wives [8] were reared by their father's fourth wife's
mother, but they maintain contact with their own mothers' relatives.

These particular structural changes have taken place without
any great conflict of values. It would appear that although polygyny
was an essential feature of the old system, there was no idea that it
was wrong to remain monogamous. Indeed in any community with
a normal sex ratio, the majority of men must be monogamists and
it is not surprising that monogamy is tolerated however much
polygyny is the goal of ambitious men. Among the Ngoni the
decline in polygyny over the last fifty years has not outraged
traditional values. In like manner, we have seen that traditionally
N a man's mother and his wife's mother should share the rearing of
855 his children. This division is in accord with the statement made
183 frequently by aristocratic Ngoni that when distributing gifts a
man ought not to favour his own parents more than his wife's.
Both these injunctions indicate that even in 'the time of peace',
however clearly a man's children by a wife for whom he had paid
bridewealth belonged to his group and not to hers, the claims of a
wife's kinsfolk and their interest in the children of the marriage
were recognized. Ngoni say that children ought to live in their
father's village, but this is a statement of the same order as the oft-
N reiterated remark that the Ngoni pay bridewealth. Ngoni make
M these statements because these are part of the index of their tribal
591 identity, not because they have observed them to be true. The
177 facility with which married couples live uxorilocally is no doubt
partly due to the influence of the matrilineal uxorilocal Cewa and
other tribes, but we cannot regard this as the only operative factor.

N M *4. The moral significance of sexual activity*

In the treatment of sexual activity in girls there does appear to
836 be a certain moral dilemma. We have observed that the Cewa
177 believed that a girl who did not copulate at puberty would die,
and that the Ngoni held that a girl should be chaste until she was
married, which was some time after puberty. The seclusion of
girls was, and is, a matter arranged by women and one in which
men have very little say. It may be on this account that the Cewa
N view has largely prevailed, for the Ngoni took many women captives
M and in the early stages of the migration from Natal there seem to
563 have been more Ngoni men than women. The women were not so
177 carefully indoctrinated into the Ngoni way of life as were men
captives, for the women's regimental system was never as highly

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[8] See above, p. 109

583 had been paid, it was her husband and not her father who initiated
593 proceedings against her and her lover. Residence was equated
with political allegience, and therefore it was inappropriate that
613 her children should live in their father's village until he had acquired
[591] rights in them, that is until he had acquired rights *in genetricem*
in his wife. These rights were transferred with the payment of
bridewealth. The holder of the rights both *in uxorem* and *in
genetricem* was the husband, but on his death the rights *in uxorem*
passed to a junior patrilineal kinsman of the same generation while
the rights *in genetricem* remained in the man's own segment. If the
woman was barren, it was incumbent on those who had been
recompensed for the transfer of rights *in genetricem* to provide
another wife whose children occupied the position of children of
the barren wife.

Nowadays the legalization payment confers rights *in uxorem*
[428] and bridewealth rights *in genetricem*. Rights *in genetricem* are
inherited in the same way as before, but rights *in uxorem* do not
pass automatically to a younger brother of the husband on his
death. If a widow agrees to be inherited, and a younger brother
[587] willing to have her, then he acquires rights *in uxorem* over her without
any further legalization payment. If, however, either no younger
brother is forthcoming or the widow is unwilling, the rights revert
to the woman's own group, who cannot themselves exercise them.
When she takes a new husband he makes the legalization payment
to them, and not to the kin of the dead husband, and thereby acquires
his rights *in uxorem*. If rights *in genetricem* have already been
transferred to the dead husband, the new husband can never acquire
them. If at the beginning of a marriage bridewealth is offered, its
acceptance transfers both rights *in uxorem* and *in genetricem*.

611 Whereas the rights *in genetricem* were definite in the old system,
591 in the new they are vague and of doubtful value. In the old scheme
they were related to position in a residential system of which one
602 of the generating principles was patrilineal descent and succession.
178 With the breakdown of this system one can no longer say so clearly
that a man belongs to one group of kinsmen rather than another.
The lineage segment is no longer a significant group with spatial
reference and a hierarchy of authority. Kinsmen, however related,
who live near one another tend to help each other, visit one another,
and support each other in quarrels and in visits to court. Some of
the men and women who go to court in support of A will also go in
support of B, while others will not. B shares certain supporters with
C, and so on. The men and women who are relatives and neighbours
611 cannot be divided into a collection of mutually exclusive groups,
for membership of one man's group partly overlaps with membership
591 of another's, and every man has, as it were, a different set of people,
602 some of them patrilateral kin, some matrilateral, and some affines,
whom he is prepared to support. There is no widely-held indigenous
theory of procreation such as in other cultures provides a rationaliza-

as well as to her husband and his kin, while a man tries to enlist 594 the support of his own kin but not usually of his wife's kin if the dispute has nothing to do with marital affairs. At birth and death the division of labour and responsibility is mainly on sex lines. In general we may say that the elementary family does not emerge as a grouping of importance because there is no system of elementary families in which it can do so. Village is posed against village in [628] dances, songs, the collection of tax, hunts, division of food, and so on. In other situations, one group of kinsmen act as a body in distinction to another group of kinsmen who are their affines. We have demonstrated this for the ceremonial situations of marriage and for the resolution of quarrels. In the intimacies of the hut, man and wife are in a simple and specific dyadic relationship which does not admit of substitution. To some extent, their infant, from conception to weaning, is a helpless appendage of this relationship. From weaning on, children acquire other social relationships of their own. The distinction drawn between marriage and the care of children is well illustrated by the remark made by an old widow when I asked her why she did not marry again. She replied 'I am now too old for marriage. My job is to look after children.' The missions encourage [179] men and women to bring up and care for their own children, particularly where the children's grandparents are pagan. At the same time the importance of the economic ties that link every Ngoni household with the rest of the world is increasing and it is easier for men to find extra money when they are young and middle-aged than when they become grandparents. These two factors may lead to an increase in the importance of the elementary family, but it is also possible that the number of children sent home from Southern Rhodesia to their grandparents may grow as more women go there to join their husbands, thus increasing the responsibilities of the old towards their young grandchildren.

9. Kinship structure, marriage payments and divorce 178 ●

We have seen that whereas in the old days divorce was infrequent, [586] it is now comparatively common. We have also seen that prior to 1898 the kinship structure of the Ngoni was based on localized agnatic and quasi-agnatic lineages, for the captor-captive relationship [613] was similar to that between father and child. These lineages are now no longer effective social groups, and individuals act and live together with cognates and affines related to them in a variety of ways. This parallel change in divorce frequency and in kinship structure provides confirmation for the hypothesis put forward by Gluckman that divorce is rare and difficult in tribes organized on a 121 system of marked father-right, and frequent and easy to obtain in 114 other types.[*] This hypothesis was suggested by a comparison of different tribes which Gluckman divides into two types. Among

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[*] Gluckman, op. cit., p. [illegible]

114 others, the Zulu and Nuer have agnatic lineages and rare divorce,
121 while the Lozi and Ila lack agnatic lineages and have frequent divorce. The Ngoni before 1898 appear to belong to the first type and the Ngoni of the present-day to the second. In 'the time of peace'
178 the fertility of the married woman was transferred by the payment
602 of bridewealth to her husband's lineage segment, and the children whom she produced were recruits to that segment. Her agnates could never claim the children for their matrilateral segment. Associated with this system were the levirate, the sororate, and the right to enforce betrothal on pain of the return of gifts. The simple legal family was a relatively stable unit, and its position within the lineage segment was determined rigidly by the ranking of co-wives. Divorce was rare and could be effected only on the initiative of the husband. By contrast the affiliation of children nowadays is not fixed, and the very groups themselves to which they would formerly have attached themselves are no longer important. The children borne by a woman, whatever marriage payments have or have not been made for her, are potential recruits to local kin groups led by a variety of different relatives. Compared with the past, the simple legal family is unstable and divorce is frequent and easy. As might be expected, the levirate and sororate and enforceable betrothal, the trappings of the old system, have declined in importance.

114 Gluckman also suggests that in general, marriage payments fall in value with the decreasing dominance of patrilineal descent, although he cites the Ila as a virilocal people with high marriage payments, no agnatic lineages and frequent divorce. He regards the influence of property on marriage payments as secondary, but writes: 'On this hypothesis, which needs more testing, the amount of goods transferred and the divorce rate tend to be directly associated, but both are rooted in the kinship structure. It is rare divorce which allows high marriage payment, rather than high marriage payment which prevents divorce.'[7] The Ngoni material
121 suggests that payments, kinship structure and divorce frequency are connected and that among them, as among the Ila, frequent divorce does not preclude high payments.

We may distinguish three phases in the history of Ngoni marriage
583 payments. Prior to 1898 bridewealth varied in amount from one to a
586 dozen beasts, depending on the status of the woman's father. In
178 addition, recently captured women were married, both by men of high and low status, without payment of cattle. There is no indication that divorce was any less rare in one section of the community than another. In our pre-1898 sample, as set out in Table I, only one marriage out of eighteen ended in divorce, despite the absence of payments in half the marriages. It is true that in the single instance of divorce there were no marriage payments, yet even this marriage does not suggest marital instability as we

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[7] Gluckman, op. cit., pp. 192, 200.

have been discussing it. Divorce took place because the man, a 583 recently captured Kunda, ran away back to his former tribe leaving 586 his wife, daughter of one of Mpezeni's lieutenants, behind in her father's village. In 'the time of peace' marriages were stable, with 178 or without payment. The wealthy men were the politically important men, and indeed Wiese's assertion that men married off their [554] daughters so as to gain the maximum number of cattle[8] may be based on the behaviour of socially ambitious fathers in what was [571] largely an upward-mobile society. Political affiliation effected by marriage was ratified by a transfer of wealth appropriate to its importance in the general field of political and social relations. Divorce frequency and kinship structure were the same for rich and poor, aristocrats and captives, and were neutral factors in determining the amount of marriage payment.

The second phase began immediately after the war of 1898 and lasted until about 1930. At the beginning of this period the tribe as a whole was poorer than it has been before or since. Many cattle were looted in the war and for a long time there was little money in [727] circulation. The majority of marriages without payment were contracted during this phase, and it seems reasonable to associate this in part with the poverty of the people. It is difficult to make any precise estimate of divorce frequency at this time, although we know that many Cewa and Nsenga women who had been married before 1898 deserted their husbands and returned home when British control was established. There does not seem to be any evidence for supposing that at this period women moved from one husband to another within the confines of the Ngoni kingdom more quickly than they do now. It is perhaps safe to say that the low level of payments was due partly to poverty but also partly to the general uncertainty about the future, about the kind of society which the White Administration was building for the Ngoni. Evans-Pritchard has stressed that 'It is morals that censure divorce and law that refuses to [114] recognize grounds for divorce which ensure the stability of the union of husband and wife.'[9] The laws and moral code that had been enforced by the old chieftainship had been shaken by the defeat of 1898. The payment of bridewealth had defined legitimate expectations of behaviour, obligations and rights, within an organized system of social relations which had been shattered. While many Ngoni must still have regarded marriage with payment of bridewealth as morally right and desirable, they must also have been aware of the greatly increased risk they were running when making these payments, even if they had the cattle to make them. Rights *in uxorem* and *in genetricem* which were socially recognized but could not be enforced through the machinery of the State were hardly

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[8] See above, p. 3, footnote 3.

[9] Evans-Pritchard, 'Social character of bride-wealth, with special reference to the Azande', *Man*, xxxiv (1934), p. 174.

583 rights at all. The payment of bridewealth had in the past enabled
586 affinally related groups of kin to 'foresee the behaviour of one another
178 in given situations since the payments evoke the behaviour' [19] but
now the given situations were unlikely to occur. We may say then
in this second phase poverty and uncertainty about the overall
system of social relationships within which marriages would continue
caused marriage payments to be low and, in some instances, non-existent.

The gradual increase in power of the Native Authority and the
[436] contemporaneous increased participation in the money economy
have brought about further changes in the third phase, beginning
round about 1930. In recent years the value of the legalization
payment has increased and seems likely to increase further. This
change is demonstrated in Table VII, although we must recall that
the time classification in this table is by year of marriage, not year
[171] of payment. Similar increases have been noted among other
Eastern Province tribes, notwithstanding cultural differences between
them and the Ngoni. This increase has been possible because of the
[465] rise in wages and prices, but we cannot regard this as the sole cause.
This simple hypothesis is ruled out by the simultaneous fall in
[435] bridewealth, as suggested by Table VI. While wages have risen, the
rights associated with bridewealth have declined in importance and
those associated with the legalization payment have remained
significant. A high payment gives each particular marriage the
mark of stability, yet at the same time the process which enables a
young man to offer as much as £10 for his bride without appealing
to his kinsmen for help has also made his expectation of life-long
marriage with her less than it would have been thirty years ago,
when he would have offered only 6s. Men earn money in Southern
Rhodesia and the Copperbelt. They move freely between urban
and rural environments, using the money to make large marriage
payments in the villages. They stand on their own, do not call
[641] on their senior agnates for help, marry where they will, and settle
with that headman whose village most attracts them or is most
conveniently situated for siting a new shop. Yet if in this way
they can free themselves from prescribed affiliation to a kin group,
so can their children do the same. The former structural basis for
[581] stable marriage, the invariable affiliation of children to their agnatic
[613] group, has gone. There is as yet no system of law and morals, nor
[182] sufficient interest in inheritable property, to provide an alternative
means of stablizing marriage. As among the Ila, high marriage
payments accompany frequent divorce.

The hypothesis that increased frequency of divorce among the
[121] Ngoni is due mainly to the breakdown of their agnatic system may
[171] be supported by comparison with the Zulu and other Natal tribes.
586 Here the old system, characterized by strong agnatic affiliation and

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[19] *ibid*, p. 172.

rare divorce, has survived despite loss of sovereignty, territorial 121
dispersal, economic impoverishment, high incidence of labour migra- 171
tion, and frequent adultery and illegitimacy.[11] The Ngoni, 586
subjected to similar external processes, but in addition surrounded
by matrilineal peoples and themselves largely of matrilineal origin, [581]
have lost their agnatic affiliation and, with it, stable marriage.

It is difficult to see exactly where this trend will lead. The third 121
phase, as I have characterized it, is a recent development. There
does not seem to have been any sharp rise in marriage payments 583
until the 1939-45 war. During the war many Ngoni men earned 586
higher wages than ever before in the Army and in industry. It 178
may have been this that was decisive in raising the level of payments. It will be remembered that the thirty shillings minimum for the legalization payment was fixed by law during the war. It may, however, be suggested that if it is hoped by raising the level of payments to achieve stability in marriage, this hope is in vain. Payments may rise if people are in a position to pay more. Higher wages permit higher marriage payments without necessitating further changes in economic life, but in fact these changes are already taking place. Money is needed for more clothes, more food, more education, as well as for higher marriage payments. Payments rise as Africans participate increasingly in the general money economy of Southern Africa. The more they participate, the less marriage is constrained by a kinship structure based on morally significant face-to-face relations between agnates. The higher payments rise the more frequent becomes divorce. This is not a long-term prognosis, for I have indicated above that affiliation is not the only possible determining factor, and it is clear that if more people align themselves with those missions which do not permit divorce, the frequency of divorce as a whole may decline. There are other possibilities, but it seems to me unlikely that any of these other social mechanisms will become effective quickly; therefore the most probable concomitant of a rise in marriage payments in the immediate future is more frequent divorce.

Thus we see that at least for the Ngoni, changes in the amount and distribution of property have had a marked effect on the level of marriage payments, and that this effect can to some extent be isolated from that due to changes in kinship structure and in divorce frequency.

10. *Attempts to resist change*

The major structural changes taking place in Ngoni society in the 178
last fifty years have not come about entirely unopposed. The 648
Administration, the missions, and the Ngoni people themselves have noticed from year to year how the old order was changing and with varying success have made attempts to control the direction of change.

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[11] Cf. information from Kark cited by Gluckman, op. cit., p. 204, footnote 1

178 648 change. In the field of marriage we have seen that it was the conscious intervention of the Administration which forced the abolition of the death penalty for adultery. It is to some extent due to the Administration, with its emphasis that women must have rights equal to those of men, that divorce is more frequent than it was, though this result does not seem to have been planned. In the eyes of the Administration the important fact is that it is more difficult for a woman to get a divorce among the Ngoni than among the Cewa. Of recent years it has been more concerned with the increase in concubinage, prostitution and juvenile delinquency in the towns, and has introduced measures designed to check the flow of women and children from the rural areas to the towns. As we have seen, one result has been that it is possible for rights *in genetricem* to be enforced in inter-tribal marriages, and bridewealth has therefore more significance in these marriages than in marriages within the tribe.

829 181 The Ngoni people themselves have, on the whole, accepted the changes passively and regretfully. The one deliberate constructive action appears to have been the law made in about 1944 that the legalization payment shall be at least thirty shillings. Apart from this, the Ngoni appear to have been overwhelmed by events. The frustrations of the present time are all attributed to the coming of the Whites, and this in turn provides the reason why nothing can be done to change things. The past, 'the time of peace', is glorified and simplified, and to some extent reinterpreted in terms of the new values which have been acquired in the interim. Thus, some informants said that the Ngoni never fought other tribes, but only invited people to join the Ngoni kingdom. People like to assert dogmatically that adulterers were always killed, that every man always paid bridewealth, that women always married whom they were told, and only reluctantly admit, on closer questioning, that there were sometimes exceptions to these rules. The imputed rules of the past have become the 'customs' of the present, and the adjective *Ngoni* is applied not to what the Ngoni people do today but to what they like to think they did in the virtuous past. *Ngoni* marriage (*ukwati wacingoni*) *is marriage in which all the ceremonial* observances are carried out in detail, 'snuff-box' and bridewealth are paid, the woman is obedient and fertile, the man dutiful and respectful towards his wife's parents, and in which the couple 'live well together'. This is contrasted with modern marriage (*ukwati wamakono*) in which there is no bridewealth, few ceremonies, little attention paid to obligations towards kin, and in which the woman sues successfully for divorce. Modern marriage is an invention of the Whites, designed to worry the Ngoni. The Whites have conquered the Ngoni, they are the owners of the country, and there is nothing to be done except to keep alive the knowledge of the past.[19]

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[19] Cf. Read, op. cit. 'The moral code . . .', and 'Traditions and prestige . . .', *passim*.

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This attitude of resignation, while still very common, has to some extent been replaced by a more constructive attitude among members of the Native Authority bureaucracy. Chiefs, councillors and other officials have considerable political power and are encouraged to use it by the Administration, whose policy it is to strengthen the hand of the Native Authority.[18] Court members introduce changes in law with some confidence, although this is still done under the guise of a re-enforcement of a forgotten traditional law. Chiefs, under increasing pressure from their people and the Administration, endeavour to take action to modify social life in their areas. As yet political action is not very sophisticated, and the workings of the Administration are not well understood. In those fields of activity where Administrative interest is strongest, such as price control, food production, and the amalgamation of villages, the Ngoni response tends to be in moral rather than in political terms. It is wrong that the price of maize should be so low, the good man knows best how to cultivate his own garden, people in a village must live peacefully together. By contrast, in the field of marriage, where the Administration is comparatively disinterested, and where the wishes of the Administration, missions and Ngoni do to a large extent coincide, the bureaucracy has been able to act in a more positive manner. The thirty shillings law is one of the rare legislative acts of the Ngoni chiefs and people, and it is significant that the law was not made until 1944, fifteen years after the passing of the Native Authorities Ordinance. It is said that the law was made so that women could be punished for adultery in the same way as men. At the meeting at which the law was agreed upon, it was also decided that bridewealth should be a minimum of six pounds or one cow. Whereas the ruling about legalization payments is still remembered and increasingly followed, the bridewealth rule has been largely forgotten. This attempt to check adultery by increasing the legalization payment was in general agreement with the wishes of the Administration and more or less with the wishes of the missions. It was possible to envisage a decrease in adultery due to a clarification of rights *in uxorem* without any other major structural changes, whereas the re-introduction of bridewealth as a universal payment could only be envisaged in terms of a return to the patrilineal virilocal residential system of 'the time of peace'. It would hardly have been possible for the Native Authority to have restored the old system had they wished to do so. Ngoni village life is now part of a system wider than the chiefdom and there are other ways of acquiring wealth and status than within the residential system and at the pleasure of the Paramount Chief.

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11. Marriage in an omnidirectional kinship system

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We may characterize the change from the old order to the new

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[18] Cf. Barnes, op. cit. 'Some aspects of political development . . .'.

178 as one from a graded segmentary society organized on a basis of
patrilineal descent and modified by political promotion to a society
of villages organized on a basis of omnidirectional kinship. In the
past a man lived in the same place as his father and in charge of the
591 segment allocated to him by his father. Now a man lives where he
611 can find relatives of one kind or another who may be related to him
agnatically, cognatically, affinally, or by any combination of these
602 ways. He is not even restricted to consanguineal relatives, as in
571 cognatic kinship systems, for he can affiliate himself to some person
178 who is linked cognatically neither to him or to any of his potential
descendants, as when he goes to live with his father's wife's mother's
brother. Genealogical connexion can be traced along all possible
paths and there are no mechanisms by which one path is automatically favoured or by which the length of a path is restricted. In
consequence the genealogical constitution of any local group of
relatives is complex, and every man is a potential recruit to many
local groups. He selects between the numerous possibilities open to
him on the basis of his own inclinations and in response to the
various pressures exerted on him by his siblings, his parents, his
wife, her parents, and others. Once he has made his choice he can
always change his mind and move elsewhere if he finds his neighbours
556 irksome. His wealth, either in cattle or money, is his own and he
can take it with him when he moves. There are no rights in land
823 (with the one exception of dry season gardens) which might otherwise
tie him to one particular spot. As with residence, so with marriage
581 payments, the formal and informal procedures of marriages, and the
values associated with them. In all, considerable variation is
tolerated. Indeed, we may well regard variation as a necessity in
571 this system, for every man is subject to a mass of potential conflicting
claims and he cannot possibly honour them all simultaneously.
Variation occurs not because of different practices by various sections of the population but rather because of different individual decisions. A man decides for himself whether or not he will pay bridewealth, or take a hoeing party to his wife's mother's garden, or be suspended from the sacraments for marrying a second wife. Yet although he makes these choices himself, he is all the time subject to social pressure from kinsfolk and neighbours who will be affected by his decisions and who therefore try to influence them. A woman is not quite so free as a man, but she too can make many decisions for herself, and her relatives must appeal to her if they wish to influence her, for they cannot force her against her will. Man and wife living together are in a unique relationship which is personal and non-transferable, yet they live in the midst of kinsfolk and the well-being of one relative is the concern of all. The quarrels of a married couple are a danger to the cohesion of the local group in which they live, while the longer they live together, fertile and peaceful, the greater the local solidarity.

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distributed among the women of the party as a recompense for carrying the beer. The married couple drink the beer but do not take any prominent part in the proceedings. The next day the man's father gives a beast or a goat or money to the leader of the party. The animal is killed and the women carry the meat back to their own village where it is divided up by some important relative of the wife. If some of the sprouted maize and flour that were prepared for the brewing remain over, the mother-in-law may brew again, and send it to her son-in-law as before. The second brew of beer is called 'offering'.[1]

Appendix V

ENTERING THE WIFE'S MOTHER'S HUT

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As performed nowadays elements are combined from what formerly were two distinct ceremonies. The name of one of these, 'eating together' (*mzyelano*) is now not often heard and the combined ceremony is known by the name of the other, 'entering' (*mngeniso*). It represents the final stage in the acceptance of the man as a satisfactory son-in-law and marks the formal setting aside of the avoidance relationship between him and his wife's mother. It is performed in about one marriage in eight. I attended two of these ceremonies.

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Some informants say that like the carrying of beer the ceremony of entering is not performed unless the legalization payment is made. However, I have recorded instances in which the ceremony was performed in the absence of any payment. It almost always occurs after beer has been carried to the man's village once or twice and when the man is living virilocally.

The parents of the woman send word to the village of the man that on such and such a day there will be beer brewed for him to enter the hut of his mother-in-law. On the day appointed the man and his wife go in procession with other people, singing and dancing, from their village to the village of the woman's parents. The procession traditionally should be led by the eldest child of the marriage, boy or girl, holding a club aloft, but this is not always done. The man's parents do not go with the party but stay behind in the village. On the outskirts of the woman's parents' village, the party may be met by people dancing out to meet them, and they sometimes pause to drink beer brought out to them. The dancing party go on into the cattle byre, or if there is no byre to some clear space on the fringe of the village. They enter the byre in a rough

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[1] *Nsembe*, an Nsenga word.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

PREFACE BY THE REV. ALEXANDER HETHERWICK, D.D.

114 The author of the following book has been for
some years located among the Nyanja-speaking
tribes of British Central Africa at Blantyre, and
afterwards in Central Angoniland. His occupation
as a member of the African Lakes Corporation has
brought him into close contact with the native
122 population of these districts. He has taken advantage
of his opportunities to familiarize himself
with the native language, of which he has acquired
a very competent knowledge. In the course of his
126 studies he made a collection of native folk-lore and
stories which illustrate in the fullest degree the
various constructions, idioms and grammatical
forms of the language. These he has now published
with the coöperation of the Directors of the
Corporation.

121 The book is of value as containing examples
of native life, habits and customs which are rapidly
disappearing from the country before the advance of
civilization and the work of Christian missions. The
coming generation of natives will grow up under
[198] new influences, and the habits of thought and belief
that ruled the lives of their fathers will soon be forgotten.
Collections of folk-lore such as this book
contains are therefore invaluable for the light they
throw on a state of native life that is rapidly passing
away.

To get into the heart of the native mind is a task well-nigh impossible for a European. The nearest

212 The Fort Jameson Ngoni[3] are at this stage of transition. Many men and
some women can read, if not write, and we can no longer call the tribe non-
literate. Yet a society of this kind behaves in many ways as if it were non-
literate. In particular, information about the past is transmitted orally and
laws and customs are not committed to writing. In this paper I shall discuss
some of the ways in which this information is manipulated. I shall distinguish
121 between tales of fighting, relating to the period 1821–1898, which we may
regard as tribal legends of origin; beliefs about customary behaviour relating
to the same period; private legends which serve to explain the form of
relations between present-day groups; and lastly history proper, documents
describing contemporary events, if such exist.

181 Early travellers all speak of the various Ngoni groups as fierce warrior
tribes interested only in destruction and plunder. With the spread of European
[177] control Ngoni raids ceased. Today in villages inhabited mainly by
women and children, with scraggy animals and eroded gardens, the traveller
181 looking for signs of a military tradition sees only khaki greatcoats and battle-
178 dress. Among the Fort Jameson group, if not elsewhere, the great cowhide
shields, and the regiments which carried them, have disappeared. Yet the
battles of the past are still remembered and are called to mind in songs sung
[538] at drunken parties, in tales told to children and, importunately, to sympathetic
strangers. Many of these songs are in the old Ngoni language now
533 largely forgotten, and singers cannot give any precise meaning to the songs
182 they sing. They are the relics of the past learnt parrot-fashion and in the
context in which they are sung they do not require any specific reference.
In our own culture we do not need to know who were the April rainers
before we can sing "Green grow the rushes, O". Prose tales, however, are in
538 ordinary speech and describe military exploits of people known to the
speaker, or preparations for raiding ordered by the Paramount Chief and
carried out by his lieutenants. The most frequently recounted battle of all is
173 the fight between Ngoni and British troops in 1898. Many men and women
648 are still alive who remember the fighting or even took part in it. The
186 cataclysmic changes which followed the Ngoni defeat and the unusual
weapons used combine to make the battle memorable. It is the only admitted
defeat, for all other tales tell only of victory. The Ngoni defeated the Bemba,
Wisa, Cewa, Kunda, and so on.

175 We know from contemporary travellers' accounts that though on the
648 whole the Ngoni were successful against their neighbours, their run of successes
was not unbroken. There is evidence that on occasion even the Cewa
raided the Ngoni and took captives. We may regard the form taken by these
legends as due in part to the process found in most cultures by which victories
648 are remembered and defeats forgotten. But the distortion introduced is not
177 only the elimination of defeat. The Administration and the Missions have,

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[3] I worked among these people during 1946–49 while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

181 that the defeat of 1898 is important. Although they claim to have conquered
186 all their African neighbours, Ngoni do not claim success over the British.
Instead, defeat at the hands of the British is cited in explanation of every
648 present-day failure and of every departure from traditional practice. Ngoni
186 say, "If we had not been defeated we would not have lost our land and we
would not now go hungry"; and "If we had not been defeated the tribes
would not have been mixed up and we could follow our customs properly",
[929] and so on. In the past, captives taken by the Ngoni were rapidly indoctrinated
with Ngoni ways and themselves became proud Ngoni; Ngoni complain
that now, although captured by Europeans, they never become Europeans.

538 The general legends of the past from which these notions are derived are
814 common knowledge. In the main they are passed on orally and are maintained
by the teaching of tribal history in schools, the appeals to old military
traditions, when recruiting for the Northern Rhodesia Regiment, the conversations
of planters comparing one tribe with another as labourers, by the
reports of administrators and by the writings of ethnologists.

643 The link between the Ngoni of today and their illustrious forebears is also
182 symbolized in the office of the Paramount Chief. He bears the name of his
[551] warrior great-grandfather, and the formal aspects of his relationship to his
people are explained by reference to his ancestors' achievements. He cannot
attend funerals or take part in some of his own marriage ceremonies because
"he has already conquered all others"; he cannot be expected to walk through
the bush with the District Officer because "he has already conquered the
whole world". He basks in his great-grandfather's invincibility, for in this
context the defeat of 1898 is forgotten. The relationship between the Paramount
Chief and his eleven minor chiefs is partly determined by the distribution
of power in different branches of the royal lineage before the
European conquest, and the division of the country into these minor
chiefdoms is a visible reminder of that distribution.

829 Associated with these tales of military exploits and royal power are myths
178 about former customs. Ngoni say that in the old days they used to hunt, or
marry, or build villages, in a particular way and that now they do differently.
Frequently when I asked what happened in such-and-such a situation I would
be told what my informant thought would have happened before 1898 rather
[983] than what he had seen happen now. Thus if we ask what payments do Ngoni
make in marriage we are told that there are two payments, "snuff-box" and
bridewealth, consisting of one or more beasts. Further inquiry reveals that
these payments are now made only infrequently and that the period referred
to is before 1898. More detailed investigation suggests that in many pre-1898
marriages they were not made and that when they were made they did not
always consist of beasts. Ngoni do not deny these facts but they do deny their
relevance. To them the distinctively Ngoni way of marrying is with these
two payments, and it is this process alone which merits the vernacular
adjective—*cingoni*. They regret that people no longer marry in this way and

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● 178 blame the Europeans for it; but it remains part of the distinctive cultural
heritage of the tribe.

As we might expect, notions of this kind do not provide sanctioned
182 standards of conduct nor ideal patterns towards which Ngoni strive. They
may be used to explain or justify a state of affairs, as we have seen, but they
do not directly determine action. An individual who departs from traditional
custom, in these terms, is not necessarily censured. Indeed, men who are
[591] knowledgeable about the glorious past do not follow traditional ways any
more than do less-well-informed people. According to tradition the Ngoni
are a virilocal people, yet if a man goes to live with his wife's relatives his own
kinsfolk cannot force him to return by appeal to this virilocal tradition.
[606] Traditionally a man avoids his mother-in-law. Yet I once saw an aristocratic
man, a great authority on traditional history, on leave from work sitting on
a verandah chatting with his mother-in-law. I said to him, "I thought a man
should avoid his mother-in-law." He laughed and replied, "Yes, so he
should. This behaviour is disgusting, and as soon as I come to live here
permanently I shall see that customs are properly followed."

647 In certain situations the Fort Jameson Ngoni appear as a tribe in contrast
to other tribes. The tribe is an administrative unit, with its own chiefs, its
619 own area and sometimes its own District Officer. Representatives from each
tribe in the region sit together to form the Native Urban Court and the
693 Provincial Advisory Council. The Ngoni representatives on these bodies
tend to present distinctively Ngoni views to contrast with the views of their
184 colleagues. Thus there may be a discussion on wills. There is an Ngoni view,
648 a Cewa view, and so on. The Ngoni representative repeats the old story
182 about bridewealth, virilocal residence, the rights of the eldest son, and these
are recorded as being the Ngoni custom in the matter. Even when discussing
such an apparently modern issue as wills, the tendency is to go back to this
mythical past. It is in terms of this past, in reality as well as in myth, that
Ngoni are different from their neighbours. In the present, as contrasted with
Europeans, Ngoni and Cewa are much the same. Ngoni pay bridewealth in
the same way as the English eat roast beef. It is a national characteristic, but
183 one located in the minds of men rather than observable in their actions or
their aspirations. Instead of the scarifications and totemic observances which
distinguish their neighbours, Ngoni express their tribal identity by having
distinctive customs which, conveniently, need not be followed.

183 In the Native Urban Court a similar process appears to operate, but here,
unlike at the Advisory Council, there is a greater need to come to grips with
692 real situations which require action, and tribal distinctiveness is tempered
184 with practical reality. In the purely Ngoni Native Courts appeals are made
to traditional practice in a different way. The courts are required by the
671 Administration to follow tribal custom and people know that the courts are
bound in this way. In fact, however, the courts have continually to deal with
692 new situations and to make decisions which are unprecedented. This is done
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175 is now a subject taught in the primary schools. All these are based on the
814 recollections of old Ngoni men and women more than on contemporary
documents, of which there are very few. We must therefore regard them
as written legends rather than proper histories. Differences between one
version and another are sometimes related to the different political affiliations
of those providing the information.[6] The period from 1821 to 1898 is treated
in detail and the remaining fifty years dismissed in a few lines. It seems likely
therefore that in time the tribal legend will be ossified, or that at least there
will be one version widely known. Yet the vernacular texts are written in
[195] the school language (Nyanja) which is not yet the ordinary village speech
(Nsenga), and are learned largely parrot-fashion, sometimes even with unintelligible
words included. It remains to be seen how much of what is learnt
under these conditions is carried over into life outside the classroom.

With the increasing documentation of modern life we might well hope
212 that the period of legend alone will end and Ngoni history proper will begin.
175 Unfortunately this is not so. Although it is fairly easy to find out from contemporary
178 documents what went on in tribal affairs from 1890 to 1898, with
the imposition of British rule a curtain descended. Official reports grow
shorter and shorter with the years for there was less and less to record.
Towards the end of the British South Africa Company's rule the published
information on Ngoni life was little more than the annual statement, covering
the whole of Northern Rhodesia, that "the conduct of the natives has
been satisfactory". From the beginning of Colonial Office control in 1924
reports have lengthened, but these have dealt with the history not of the
Ngoni tribe but of the Eastern Province and of Northern Rhodesia. These
larger regions have become the significant units of government, not individual
tribes and chiefdoms. The Fort Jameson Ngoni have become more and more
closely integrated with the wider society and less and less have any history of
their own. When the Ngoni were making history they lacked means to
record it; now that means are available they have no history to record.

Thus we see that in this transitional society internal and external relations,
156 as well as the level of technical skill, influence both the way in which people
182 relate themselves to their past and also the timing and content of their written
history.

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[6] Read and Winterbottom have pointed out that informants from Northern Nyasaland assert that their Paramount Chief is the heir of Zwangendaba, while those from Fort Jameson say that their Chief is the heir. Cf. Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 467, and Winterbottom, *Outline Histories*, p. 13.

TRADITION AND PRESTIGE AMONG THE NGONI

MARGARET READ

I. THE NGONI PEOPLE. Before I made my first camp in an Ngoni 114
village, many Europeans had said to me, 'There are practically no 178
Ngoni left to-day. They are all hopelessly mixed with other tribes.
None of them keep to the Ngoni customs any longer. Their chiefs
are no good.' From the doorway of my hut I saw people coming all [649]
day long to the Paramount Chief, behaving towards him with profound
respect, bringing him presents, working for him. His children [646]
formed a special group in the village, easily recognizable by their
bearing and their manners. Old *indunas*[a] came to instruct me, as they
had instructed chiefs in their day, on the duties of a ruler, and the
code of Ngoni laws. Old warriors in war dress came and danced by
the cattle kraal and sang praise songs. Courts were held with scrupulous [692]
regard for order and justice. Other chiefs came visiting from
distant parts with their retinues, and were received ceremonially. It [631]
soon became apparent that here was the centre of a political state,
whose head was invested with prestige and authority over a wide area,
and where behaviour to the Paramount and to every one else was [183]
strictly regulated by custom, and as strictly observed. These were
Ngoni, and they and their fellow Ngoni in other areas[1] for the next
ten months introduced me to the Ngoni people. The European assertion,
that they no longer existed as a people, they laughed at, and
proceeded to demonstrate that the contrary was true.

The Ngoni are found to-day scattered over four East African territories. 131
The largest groups are in Nyasaland in the districts of Mzimba,
Dowa, Fort Manning, Dedza, and Ncheu. In Northern Rhodesia they
are in the Fort Jameson and Lundazi districts bordering on Nyasaland.
Another section is in Portuguese East Africa on the South-West
border of Nyasaland. Under other names there are Ngoni settlements
in Tanganyika Territory. The present divisions of the Ngoni 101
are due partly to European frontiers, partly to the fact that more than

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[1] According to the census returns there are about 80,000 Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia and nearly 190,000 in Nyasaland, with other groups in Tanganyika Territory and Portuguese East Africa.

[a] [i.e., military leaders.—Analyst]

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Marav*i* FR4

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Stated very briefly, the problem is this: an Ngoni aristocratic minority 12.1 created an Ngoni 'state' of mixed ethnic units, imposed a national [642] identity on all who formed part of it, and inspired a real 'national [641] feeling' among those who were assimilated. In this article I propose to look at this problem as it exists to-day in the light of white contact, and more particularly as a prelude to Indirect Rule. My thesis is that N Ngoni 'national feeling' is based on the traditions of their past—on [156] the story of their southern origin, their trek from the south, and their settlement in their present areas. I shall show how the continued N preservation of their distinctive institutions, together with their strong [78] historical sense, gave them a dominant position in the country, which was enforced through their military and political supremacy. This N supremacy was first challenged and then overthrown by the arrival of [721] the Europeans and the defeat of the Ngoni military power. The situation [648] thus created is the key to the Ngoni attitude towards white contact to-day.

The plan of work which I adopted at the beginning had as its aim the establishing of certain essential data—namely, to determine the principles of local or territorial settlement in relation to the political N organization and the ethnic constitution of the area. This involved 126 making maps of the Paramount Chief's 'country' and of the 'coun- [652] tries' of his subordinate chiefs, showing the areas over which individuals exercised authority and their relation to those above and below them in the political hierarchy. It also involved making a number of village plans, showing the alignment of houses on the village site, the names and clans of the inhabitants and their mutual relations in N terms of kinship groups and village organization.[1] In villages called M Ngoni villages, that is, where the 'owner' of the village was of a [631] recognized Ngoni clan and where there was a nucleus of Ngoni clans- [619] men, the individuals in Ngoni clans numbered from 25–75 per cent. of the total inhabitants, the average being about 45 per cent. In a N M number of the villages where no Ngoni clans were represented, they [641] villagers nevertheless asserted, 'We are Ngoni, because we are the

[1] This collecting of village plans was viewed with some suspicion at first as a new way of helping the Government to catch tax defaulters. However, when I promised the Paramount Chief that no one in the locality should see the village plans, he sent out word that I was to be given all the information I needed, and no one need fear the consequences. N M 123

We have also to recognize that the wider connotation of the word is 101 in constant use to-day, and it will be apparent in the course of this article that those who like to be thought Ngoni but have no real claim [829] to the name, find ways in which to identify themselves with the real [565] Ngoni, and to impress upon outsiders that they share the distinction of that name.

III. Ngoni Society as a Cultural Unit. It is evident that the 128 field worker who tries to describe and analyse the society which is found in the Ngoni areas to-day has some difficulty in establishing appropriate and correct terms. Here is a society which is a compound 178● of ethnic units, subdivided into clans according to kinship, stratified 829 into ranks, held together by a ruling aristocracy and a strong centralized political organization. [105] This society differs radically from that of a homogeneous community where the sociological structure has gone through a long process of integration or disintegration, or has remained static over a period of time. The Ngoni created their 'state', that is, their present political and social units, within a relatively short period by a series of deliberate acts. They brought with them a pattern of society from the south; they modified[1] it during their forty odd years of wandering and warfare; and they moulded it finally when they settled in their present areas. Within this deliberately created social structure the principles of centralization and rank were dominant. Based on these two principles the Ngoni set up, in an alien milieu, the institutions of chieftainship,[2] of military training, of systematized law courts, of recognized ranks in society, of patrilineal succession and inheritance, speaking among themselves a language foreign to the country. The resultant society, a compound of the Ngoni ruling aristocracy and the conquered indigenous people, formed the Ngoni state. So conscious was all this social engineering that old men to-day can give detailed accounts of the various processes, political, legal, military, by which the conquerors and conquered were brought under one rule.[3] Borrowing a term from European history,

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[1] One striking modification was the replacing of the village as a small kinship group by villages of hundreds of huts, with an elaborate organization into hamlets. [621]

[2] Using chieftainship in the sense of the Ngoni *inkosi* whose office and powers were very different from those of the surrounding petty chiefs.

[3] As one of these processes, the piercing of the ear-lobes became the 'tribal [304] [186]

178 it might almost be called nation-building. And when you have heard
829 the Ngoni Paramount discuss the position of minorities in his country,
and his claim to territories no longer under his rule, you could almost
imagine you were in the corridors of the League Secretariat at Geneva.

The Ngoni state, however, to-day is not only a political structure,
a framework for political and social life. Within that structure, forming
[183] parts of it, are institutions embodying those social, political,
economic, and ethical values which are peculiarly Ngoni. The Ngoni,
that is to say, when they absorbed other peoples into their state,
[177] imposed upon them a new social order together with the values inherent
in that order. Patrilineal succession and inheritance, for
example, introduced by the Ngoni, was bound up with the relations
of father to son, the acquiring and distribution of cattle, the worship
[182] of clan and family ancestors. Each institution had its clearly related
rules and values, and these are made explicit by the Ngoni when they
describe them. The casual European observer in the country sees
only the Paramount Chief and his subordinate chiefs ruling over a
welter of tribes with a confusing mixture of social behaviour. To the
Ngoni, however, and to the anthropologist who follows their lead,
the pattern of society which they set up is clear and definite; it has a
cultural reality of its own. The seeming welter of tribes is in reality
an ordered relationship. Each group, tribe, or clan, has its recognized
place *vis-à-vis* other groups. Within that ordered relationship the
different groups have pursued a process of preserving some customs
and adopting others, and they can give a coherent account of what
they have retained and what they have borrowed. The real Ngoni
do not admit to borrowing much. They like to think of their society
as very distinctive as well as being well integrated. Yet the degree of
modification in Ngoni society needs very close investigation because
it shows much variety in different localities.

121 When they entered their present areas the Ngoni were very inferior
648 in numbers to the indigenous people. How was it then that they were
[161] able to subdue them? And having subdued them, how did they pre-

[304] mark' of the Ngoni as various forms of tattooing were of other tribes. Ear-piercing
[186] was sometimes forced (i.e. upon captives taken in war), sometimes voluntary.
To-day children of local clans are teased by children of Ngoni clans and called
'Chewa' if they have not had their ears pierced, and they beg their mothers to
take them to the 'doctor' to be 'made Ngoni'.

N
M difference to-day between the attitude of the Ngoni to the Europeans
173 and that of the Chewa, for example. In the vernacular expression the
829 Ngoni say, 'The Europeans spoiled our country'; the Chewa say,
184 'The Europeans saved us'.

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173 *Chamtundiri*, then, was the period of Ngoni supremacy, when they established by force of arms their right to rule over the country and
178 its indigenous inhabitants. There was, however, some difference
642 between the political organization of the Ngoni as a conquering horde on the march, and their organization when they finally settled in their present areas. At both times the focus of their organization was warfare—they were a nation under arms. But once settled on land which they had chosen they began to spread a network of political organization over the country, and to plan in terms of 'countries'[1] instead of mobile villages. To-day when they discuss the advent of the Europeans and the consequent 'spoiling' of their country, they recall the days when extensive tribute was paid to their Paramount Chief, chiefs were free to choose good sites for their very big villages, the outlying areas were ruled by *indunas* and lesser chiefs. It was the
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[648] partial breaking up of this centralized political organization which
[829] they regarded as 'spoiling their country', as well as the economic restrictions with regard to land and the prohibition of raiding for new supplies of cattle.

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173 During this time of Ngoni supremacy Ngoni institutions flourished
178 —those institutions which they had brought with them from the
829 south and preserved through their wanderings. When they are telling
643 to-day about these years they speak fervently and reverently of the
796 part played by the Paramount Chief in every side of life, the training for warfare of all the young men, the instruction and supervision of young chiefs by old *indunas*, Ngoni marriage and initiation ceremonies. It was during this time in Mpezeni's country that the *Incwala* or first fruits ceremony was regularly observed at Mtenguleni, the village of the mother of old Mpezeni.[2] At this ceremony the Paramount Chief 'opened' the new food season by the ritual eating of new fruits, especially young maize and pumpkins. It was also the

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[1] i.e. chiefs' areas.

[2] The description of this *Incwala* given by men and women who took part in it in their youth shows much similarity to the *Incwala* of to-day among the Swazi.

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occasion on which he made known any new laws before the assembled 173
leaders of his country. The ceremony was marked by special songs 178 ●
and dances performed only at that time. It was an occasion on which 829
economics, religion, politics, social life and recreation were brought 643
together in a dramatic form in the part played by the Paramount 796
Chief *vis-à-vis* his people. When speaking of these 'good old days' the Ngoni always refer to the *Ingwala*, for it was to them symbolic of the greatness of their *Inkosi*, and of how 'they lived well' before the *Azungu* came as despoilers.

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On the subject of warfare and of training for war the Ngoni will 173
talk for hours. Among the many things which they mourn in the 178
passing of the old order, they regret most the military training of 181
youths and men, and the age-grade system which was part of it. They 721
point out how a youth had his appointed companions to whom he [702]
stood in a recognized relationship of mutual obligation and assistance, and with these companions he went through the grades of calf-herding and cattle-herding until he graduated into a regiment. The field N
worker can observe how much Ngoni 'national feeling' was bound [186]
up with memories of war days, when to-day they put on their war [535]
dress and dance war dances at a chief's village. I have seen Chewa men and women huddle together during these war dances, and mutter, 'Too many Ngoni are here', as if they were still in the days of fighting and raids, while the Ngoni warriors swagger about, swishing their kilts of skins and brandishing their shields and spears with every appearance of reality. I have heard accounts of Ngoni raids for cattle going as far as the Kafue River, into the Mashukulumbwe country, given with such details of the places on the march that I think they N
must be substantially correct. Even if it is legendary, the recital of
such raids still fosters Ngoni pride and distinction, and I have heard [186]
an old man who took part in such a raid compare it scornfully with young men going nowadays to Broken Hill and the Copper Belt. 'They go only for money', he said, 'We went for our *isidlodlo*[*] and N
for cattle to honour the *inkosi*'.

The Ngoni are realists and they admit that while they planted their 173
institutions in the country and maintained most of them, at the same 829
time a measure of adjustment was going on to the local cultures. For 177
[542]

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[*] Head-ring, the sign of a warrior ready to marry.

173 829 177 [922] this they put the blame on the women. They point out that while they were on the march the local women they picked up, with their different language and customs, had not a great deal of influence on the community. Once they were settled, however, and married local women, those women went visiting to their own homes and took their children with them, and gradually a pronounced alien element and another N M [881] language penetrated into Ngoni society. This is illustrated very well in the girls' initiation ceremonies, which differ very much in Ngoni and Chewa society. Ngoni men and women tell you with disgust how the *chinamwali*, the Chewa ceremony, began to be practised in Ngoni villages in place of the *umsindo* or [illegible] of the Ngoni. It was the only occasion on which I have heard them commend the action of the missionaries in putting down a custom, for they really despised the ceremonial and associations of the *chinamwali*, and rather than have it among them, they preferred outside help in putting it down.

The Ngoni dislike very much being asked point blank what cultural adjustments they made due to Chewa and other local customs. They admit reluctantly one or two minor adaptations, and proceed immediately to tell the major changes which they forced on the Chewa and N M [191] [562] others living under their rule. The chief adjustment by the Ngoni has undoubtedly been the adoption of the local language, as being the language of the women. Ngoni women of good family still speak Ngoni, but I have not found any instances of local women married to Ngoni men who have learned it. One of the perennial topics among the elders in an Ngoni village is the 'bad' influence of the women on the children. When pressed to explain the nature of this 'bad' influence, they say, 'The children are learning only the customs of the women. They cannot know about the Ngoni'. They lament N ● [178] the vanishing of the age-grades as the natural channels for instruction of young men in Ngoni customs, though they say with their characteristic realism, 'What is the good of having age grades and regiments when there is no war?'

N 114 If we were to attempt to reconstruct old Ngoni society as it was in the days before white contact, it is to this period, *chamtrader*, we should turn. There we can find the structure of Ngoni society, the distinctive Ngoni institutions, and Ngoni supremacy over the surrounding tribes as a reality. When the first white people arrived, as

648 in the villages to-day, they do it by going over and over the events of
814 those fateful years 1885–1898, from the first arrival of Weise up to the Ngoni war, in the vain hope of finding a satisfactory explanation of the connexion between Weise, the British South Africa Company, the North Charterland Company, and the British Crown. They give correct and precise details of the various Europeans who came to old Mpezeni's kraal seeking concessions, and finding the old chief adamant about signing away any concessions. 'Weise was his friend. Then came Weise's brother. He began to take money for our huts. Then Singu (Mpezeni's heir) became angry. Then they said, "We are Charterland" and Mpezeni refused: "I have given no promise to Charterland." Then came the *Asenga* war.'

I have given the foregoing events in detail because they are facts
[609] of history both to the Ngoni and the British, and necessary for understanding the present attitude of the Ngoni to white people. The Ngoni have given me their version again and again, always the same in substance, and always with the same emphasis, first on the refusal of Sir Harry Johnston and the British South Africa Company to recognize Mpezeni as the rightful chief in the land, and secondly on the treachery of Weise which delivered them into the hands of the North Charterland Company. Nor was the defeat in war their final
175 humiliation. Singu, Mpezeni's heir, was taken and shot together with
648 his wives; half the cattle of the Ngoni were taken as 'rightful loot';
[727] and the North Charterland Company began assigning farms to Europeans in their tract. Six years later old Mpezeni died, leaving his grandson, a comparatively young boy, as his successor. On the old *indunas* and other sons of old Mpezeni fell the burden of guiding the young *inkosi* and carrying on the political and legal machinery subject to European administration.[1] At the same time fundamental economic
178 changes were taking place. Settlers were arriving to acquire land and
[648] demand labour. The country was gradually parcelled out into European farms and native reserves, not without prolonged ill-feeling on
[484] both sides.[2] With the opportunity to work for wages came a demand
[167] for taxes to cover the costs of administration, and this demand in its turn made many men go out of the territory in search of better paid work in Southern Rhodesia and the Union.

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[1] Under British South Africa Company till 1924.

[2] See North Charterland Inquiry.

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work in Southern Rhodesia and the Union. This exodus to the south in 178
its turn brought the Ngoni into touch once more with the Matabele, 177
the Zulu, and the Swazi, and reawakened their consciousness of their 186
southern origin. It is significant that just at the point when their
power in their own country received a crushing blow, they came into
contact once more in the south with the stock from which they had
sprung and to whom they could still speak in their own language.
The anthropologist who looks for the reason why the distinctive
Ngoni culture did not die out entirely after their military defeat and
the advent of the whites, can see at least part of the reason supplied
by the results of this economic exodus to work in the south. When the
other tribes in the neighbourhood were, in the Ngoni phrase, 'running
always to the Boma' and incidentally picking up fragments of European customs, the Ngoni remained, according to their own account,
to a great extent aloof and were strengthened in this aloofness by their
renewed southern connexions.

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M
Ngoni supremacy over the country was at an end. The Europeans
were the overlords of all the tribes, not the Ngoni. Instead of one 178
big chief in the country, many small ones were now recognized who 563
dared to give themselves airs because they knew the Ngoni could not 648
compel allegiance to their Paramount. Chewa people living under
Ngoni chiefs could no longer be forced to stay there, therefore a
different attitude towards them was necessary. 'Chewa' could no
longer be synonymous with 'slave'. I have heard Ngoni chiefs in
court address their *indunas* and headmen many times on behaving well
to people of other tribes 'Or they will leave us and to-day we cannot
N
M
make them return'. A recent case in which a young chief, but a very
important one, was summoned to the Paramount's court for insulting [689]
a Chewa woman, was made the occasion by the Paramount for a long
public discourse on the present relations between Ngoni and Chewa,
pointing out that an Ngoni chief whose Chewa subjects left him would
'spoil his country' and 'all his people would be ashamed'. Ngoni
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prestige, in fact, having lost the support of military power, had to
rely on other sanctions. In their own eyes, their prestige was still due [829]
to their southern origin, their success in creating the Ngoni state in
N
M
an alien milieu, and those distinctive institutions which they had
retained. To the surrounding people, to the Chewa and other tribes, [692]

Maravi FR4

M Ngoni prestige depended partly on the very effective justice meted
178 out in the courts,[1] and also on the unquestioning allegiance of all
563 subordinate authorities to the Paramount Chief. A Chewa Paramount
648 Chief told me that he envied the power and prestige of the Ngoni
[692] Paramount, 'because all his chiefs obey him', and there is undoubtedly
[645] a widespread admiration among the less united local tribes for the
centralized political organization of Ngoni, and the fact that they can
hold a large area and many people together as an effective unit.

N The Ngoni, therefore, in the course of the last thirty-five years have
178 to a large extent made the adjustments necessary to their changed
186 relations with the local peoples. They have accepted the new situation
de facto, though they do not necessarily acquiesce in heart. They still
think they are due a unique position among the tribes, and for this
reason they dwell continually on the glories of *chamtendere*. Nor does
the adoption of some measure of European ways reconcile them to a
different attitude. Even educated Ngoni teachers and ministers have
said to me with deep regret, 'We are ashamed because we are being
ignored to-day by other tribes'.

N Their attitude towards Europeans is also partly based on the Euro-
648 pean failure to accord them a unique position among the tribes, or
[609] at least to acknowledge their former unique position. This, to them,
[186] is a cause for feeling ashamed. They are ashamed too because the
[651] land, except in the Reserves, is no longer theirs, and they have to
[184] submit to taxation. 'To pay taxes, that is our war to-day', and something of the old martial spirit is evident in the young men who successfully evade the tax collectors, where the tax is collected directly by the Government, as in Mpezeni's country. In Gomani's country, on the other hand, where taxes are collected through the chiefs and headmen, though the men groan at having to find the money, they do not attempt to evade it, first because it would be useless, and secondly because they acknowledge the right of the chiefs to collect dues from them.

N Any generalization about the Ngoni attitude to white people would
177 be inaccurate without much detailed explanation, for which there is no
609 space here. It is true though, I think, that at least in Mpezeni's country
and possibly in the others, too, the Ngoni have not yet willingly made

[1] It is said that it is useless to bribe Ngoni chiefs and councillors.

the mental adjustments necessary to white contact. They still resent 177
white intrusion and its results, economic, administrative, and missionary. 609
At the same time many of them earnestly wish for a solution of the present tension, but towards such a solution there is no easy short cut.

VIII. Conclusions. Conclusions reached after the first period of 128
field work are generally given with a certain reserve, especially in a 121
complex field such as the Ngoni present. I think, however, that the conclusions in this paper can be stated with some certainty, and as dogmatic statements they form a basis for further field work. For they set the main problems for the detailed study of the Ngoni, and also of the Ngoni as a field for observing culture contact. In this article I hope that the three chief elements in the study have emerged, namely, the problem of Ngoni society as a cultural and political unit; the culture contact problems due to the contact, and part fusion, with local tribes; and the modern culture contact problems due to European penetration.

1. The Ngoni as a group must be regarded from two points of 101
view: those who ethnically have a right to be called Ngoni, who are members of recognized Ngoni clans, with an acknowledged southern origin; and all those who live in the territory of the Ngoni Paramount Chief, and call themselves his people. These last were incorporated into the Ngoni state by the first group, who are still the ruling aristocracy, but the incorporated people now share in Ngoni 'national sentiment' and have made certain sociological changes in order to conform to Ngoni culture. It is their southern origin and their well remembered traditions of the past which confer distinctiveness on the true Ngoni, and on the state which they built. It is to their past they also turn for the charter for those institutions which are recognized as distinctively Ngoni, such as the Paramount Chieftainship, the hierarchy of rank, and patrilineal succession. Their historical origin and military achievements form also the charter for their former position as rulers of the country which they held before the advent of the Europeans.

2. The Europeans in two of the Ngoni areas destroyed the unique 177
position of the Ngoni by defeating their armies. These armies had 178

177 hitherto been the chief sanction for Ngoni supremacy. With their
● 178 invincibility gone, the regiments broke up and the Ngoni military
prestige was at an end. At the same time the direction of political
affairs and the relations between the different tribes was assumed by a
superior power. Ngoni political ascendancy and their control of
economic organization was also at an end. The subject races of the
Ngoni who had hitherto either been conquered or submitted volun-
tarily to the Ngoni had now an ally who was stronger than their
former masters.

3. The new situation forced the Ngoni to make drastic readjust-
177 ments. They had to readjust themselves to new relations with other
178 tribes, and at the same time to the Europeans. In their contact with
186 the Chewa and other subject tribes they could no longer maintain the
648 social exclusiveness which had marked the distinction between Ngoni
and slaves. There was therefore less actual resistance to culture fusion,
though the dislike of adopting alien customs persisted. This dislike
of alien customs was evident to some extent also in white contacts.
The missionaries brought a new religion, western education, and
western medicine. Other Europeans introduced land reserves, taxa-
tion, and working for wages. To the local tribes the European repre-
sented security as well as certain material benefits. To the Ngoni these
material benefits appeared less welcome in the face of their defeat.
There was therefore a psychological conflict set up among the Ngoni
178 —a malaise due to their military and political downfall, together with
181 their determination to preserve certain elements in their own culture.
182 That psychological conflict is evident everywhere to-day, and finds
expression in all conversations which turn on the relations of the
Ngoni to other tribes or to Europeans. To the persistence of that
conflict is due the strength of Ngoni 'national feeling', which has
directed the selective process by which some of their political, legal,
and social institutions have survived the results of culture contact.

4. Conditions all over Africa are changing and new forms of social
178 and political organization are emerging due to the contact of the
648 Africans with European civilization. What place has the Ngoni state
in this emergent African society? Are there still cultural realities in
Ngoni society which should be preserved, and can the Ngoni political
structure be galvanized into new life through the medium of Indirect

Rule? There might have been a time, before the Ngoni wars, when 178 treaties could have been made with the Ngoni Paramount Chiefs, and 646 the Ngoni state have evolved without defeat. Policy, however, was different in those days, and strong chiefs were crushed. The demand now is for strong tribal organization which can carry on its own administration with the minimum of European interference and direction. The vital question is: has that moment gone for the Ngoni? Has their defeat, not only military, but economic and political, so taken the heart out of them, that they can no longer rebuild their tribal organization and make a success of Indirect Rule?

The answer to that question has two desiderata. One is a thorough [121] intensive study of Ngoni society and Ngoni institutions as they exist to-day, and of the relation of the true Ngoni to those who call themselves Ngoni. The other is the willingness of Europeans, officials, missionaries, and settlers, to show some recognition of Ngoni pride in their past. The Ngoni are not children. They do not want a toy called Indirect Rule handed out to them to play with. If their political aspirations were appreciated and their racial pride acknowledged, they could make a successful synthesis between Ngoni institutions and modern administration with its concomitants of modern education and modern economic methods. They themselves discuss frequently in the men's talking places in the villages such a synthesis of Ngoni and western culture. The attempt in one area in Nyasaland to work out such a synthesis is a sign that it is not impossible. With fuller knowledge and co-operation on both sides the strength of Ngoni national sentiment might be used to make a success of the policy of Indirect Rule.

MARGARET READ.

Résumé

TRADITION ET PRESTIGE CHEZ LES NGONI

Les Ngoni sont une section des Zoulou qui habitent l'Afrique orientale. Le 000 vocable Ngoni désigne aujourd'hui deux groupes: les descendants des clans originels qui, il y a cent cinquante ans environ, émigrèrent vers le nord et les membres des tribus conquises et absorbées dans l'État Ngoni. Les Ngoni proprement dits forment une aristocratie, qui se distingue par le comportement classique et la connaissance de la langue Ngoni originelle et des traditions historiques de la tribu. Leurs institutions également diffèrent de celles des tribus avoisinantes

64 charged by him with specific functions relating to the State as a whole, and appear to have exercised general jurisdiction. Other lieutenants were known as the lieutenants of such-and-such a royal village, and were appointed by Mpezeni to look after the queens of the village and to be responsible for the internal ordering of the village.

In addition to these lieutenants each important person had a deputy,[1] who was a patrilineal kinsman of the same generation. Each new holder of the principal office selected his own deputy. The deputy's task was to act for his principal in his absence and to serve as an intermediary between the principal and his lieutenants.

[611] [558] All these posts were hereditary in the agnatic line, except for that of deputy, but new posts were continually being created and the holders of other posts fell into disgrace. Some of the lieutenants of Mpezeni were also headmen of their own villages, while other lieutenants were promoted to be regional governors.

621 ● 178 161 Increase in population led to increase in the number of villages and of recognizable divisions within villages, both by divisional fission and by the setting up of separate establishments for groups of wives. This process, operating in response to population pressure from below, was assisted from above by the need to give newly created lieutenants and governors their own dependants and their own recognizable residential cluster.

613 641 The relative position and importance of a segment of the political structure might alter if its leader was killed in battle or if he offended the Paramount. For example, a certain lieutenant who had a village of his own committed adultery with one of Mpezeni's queens. He was [619] put to death, and all his followers were made to come and live in a 621 royal village. But in addition to the natural increase in the population [72] of any segment, new members were added by capture in war. There 565 was never any distinct class of slaves or captives in the Ngoni State. [567] Apart from the aristocratic families which traced their history back to the pre-migration period in Natal, the rest of the tribe had been either captured at one time or other on the way north, or had joined the Ngoni of their own volition. On capture, people were assigned to some or other important person, and after a while acquired a certain 561 autonomy of their own. The men were all enrolled into the age-set 621 regiment appropriate to their age, and it was possible for them to rise 701 to high positions in the State. No distinction of ethnic origin was

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[1] *Mlowa*, pl. *amowa*. Cf. the Zulu term *umnawe*, younger brother who is next to the heir.

175 ten units of different orders of segmentation in the old system and are 648 now regarded as ten homologous territorial segments in the new. 631 Thus one village founded for a group of queens by Mpezeni I has given rise to two royal chieftainships, another to one royal chieftainship, and a third to a royal chieftainship and a non-royal one. On the other hand, there is no chieftainship corresponding to the son of Mpezeni I who was next in succession to the main heir.

621 634 There are royal villages in every county. The oldest royal village in a county is now the capital of the county, and the lieutenants in the capital are responsible to the county chief. 178 The minor chiefs have continued the process of making new villages for their queens, so that in each county the chief lives in a recently formed royal village, founded either by himself or by his father, and not in his capital. The capital is often the biggest village in the county, while the chief's village is more frequently quite small. It is the name of the capital village rather than that of the chief's village that serves as the name of the county itself. Thus, while in the old days the national capital changed with each new Paramount, the county capitals do not alter. The new royal villages founded since 1898 have not the same importance in the political structure as had the pre-conquest royal villages. This change is reflected in the fact that there is now no real national capital in the old sense.

692 [622] Disputes in the old days were settled in the village by the headman, or were taken to the regional governor, or to the lieutenants of the royal village, for settlement. If the matter could not be settled there it was taken to the assembly of the senior lieutenants of Mpezeni, whose decision could be set aside only by Mpezeni himself. Now each chief has a court, and there is an appeal court on which representatives from each of the ten counties sit in turn. 647 In the old days important decisions were taken by the senior lieutenants, in consultation with Mpezeni, although the four large royal villages were to some extent independent of one another. [721] Sections of the army, for instance, appear to have been sent out on raids from a royal village without reference to the Paramount.[1] [648] Under the present régime meetings of the tribe as a whole are held at Mtsomo, a centre established by the Administration at which there is a school and a dispensary. These are attended by the chiefs and such people as choose to come. These meetings are usually sponsored by the Administration, and meetings to discuss affairs that arise independently of the Administration are

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[1] Cf. [illegible], *A Trip to Mpezeni's*, p. 1.

621 usually in the male line, and, other things being equal, it is the eldest son of the chief wife who succeeds his father. However, if the heir is
622 a minor, the job of running the village may be undertaken by a brother of the deceased or by the first lieutenant of the village, and in this case difficulties may be placed in the way of the rightful heir should he claim his heritage on maturity. The usurper or his successors may take the name of the founder of the village as though there had been no break in the succession. There is among the Ngoni little of the
551 importance attached to the inheritance of names that is reported from other tribes of the region. Anyone may use the name of any of his patrilineal ancestors, so that, for example, most of the members of the royal lineage, men and women, use the name of Mpezeni on formal occasions in addition to their other personal names.

To assist him in his work a headman may nominate a deputy, and
624 there may be in the village one or more lieutenants. The office of lieutenant in a large and prosperous village tends to be hereditary, but if there is no suitable successor the headman may appoint a man from another family to succeed. Many headmen have no deputy and some have no lieutenants.

In pre-conquest times the small residential group appears to have
621 consisted of the men of an effective minimal patrilineage,[1] their wives,
582 and the families of their prisoners of war. With the passage of time
178 some of the senior captives became lieutenants of the head of the lineage and there was intermarriage between the aristocratic lineage and the captured families as well as between one captured family and another. This process of intermarriage has continued and I found, in every village I examined in the Northern Rhodesia counties, that each person is related to everyone else in the village, affinally and cognatically, in at least one way, while many people are related to each other by a number of different paths. In the Nyasaland counties this process of affinal assimilation has not been going on for so long, and here I encountered families of former captives who have not yet been linked by marriage to the family of their aristocratic captors.

Movement

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166 A village is likely to stay in the same place for a dozen years or so. During this time some of the huts will have fallen down and have been

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[1] Fortes, *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 192: '. . . the effective minimal lineage, that is, the lineage of smallest span which emerges as a corporate unit in economic, jural, and ritual activities and is differentiated from other units of a like sort.'

583 [671] been made. It is the legalization payment that is recorded on the marriage registration certificate when one is issued.

Often this payment is postponed until some years after marriage and sometimes it is never made at all. It is generally £1. 10s., and is normally provided by the bridegroom himself out of his savings, although in the old days a man would have been helped by his father. The money goes to the bride's father, and there is no legal obligation on him to share the money with his relatives, although he may do so. Marriage ties can be reinforced by a whole series of ceremonies and ceremonial exchanges and payments between the man's people and the woman's people, and a marriage in which all these ceremonies have been performed is regarded as being 'well fixed'. In such a marriage the parents and siblings of the couple have come to know each other, have collaborated in ritual activities, and have probably had occasion to deliberate together as a court of conciliation in settling quarrels between the couple. This line of development is seldom taken in a marriage in which the legalization payment has not been made. If the husband refuses to pay, then the wife's people will not brew beer for him and his parents, and will not use their influence with his wife to maintain the marriage. We may say that in a well-fixed marriage the two families are linked together, and that in one that is not well fixed it is only the two individuals who are linked. Indeed when no payments have been made it is common for the bride's relatives to profess ignorance of the home of the husband, or at least of his parents' names. No action can be taken in the court to enforce marriage payments, although in an adultery or divorce case the court may order the legalization payment to be made.

585 476 578 The ceremonies of marriage should not be thought of merely as occasions for harmonious co-operation. They may also become the vehicle for the expression of aggression between the two families involved. This is particularly true of the obligation on the man to bring a party of his friends to hoe in the garden of his father-in-law. The hoeing party may do more harm than good to the crops if the present offered them by the father-in-law is considered inadequate.

583 578 [731] Prior to the conquest of the tribe the principal marriage payment was bride-wealth,[7] consisting of so many head of cattle. In those days, according to informants, no legalization payment was made. Nowadays bride-wealth is paid only in a small proportion of marriages, and rarely until after several children have been born. In the old days

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[7] [illegible]

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

in the old days

marriages in which bride-wealth was paid were patrilocal, and those 583
in which it was not paid, except for marriages with slave wives, were 178
matrilocal. The matrilocal marriages were made only by recently [567]
incorporated Ngoni. The payment of bride-wealth is now significant
only in relation to the residence and affiliation of the children of the 591
marriage and does not affect the residence of the couple themselves. 583
It frequently happens that a man goes and lives in the village of his wife when they are first married and that after a year or so he takes her back to his own village. This practice is fairly common among the matrilineal tribes of the region. A small payment[1] of five shillings or so may be made instead to enable a man to take his bride to his own village without first completing a period of matrilocal residence. Sometimes the legalization payment is considered sufficient to exempt from matrilocal residence. Indeed it is indicative of the wide range of
variation in the different payments made and not made and in the [184]
significance attached to them that some informants were unable to state with certainty what payments had been made in their own marriages, although they knew the amount of money or animals that had been handed over.

This wide range of variation in behaviour in relation to marriage 184
is one instance of the high measure of cultural heterogeneity of the
Fort Jameson Ngoni. While present-day conditions are relevant to a 58
study of Ngoni marriage, at the same time the effect of the combination of people with very different conceptions of marriage into a single state must not be overlooked. Among families that are powerful and claim to have migrated with Zwangendaba from the south, patrilineal marriage and the payment of bride-wealth are more frequent than they are among families of more recent incorporation. Cross-cousin marriage is noticeably more frequent in villages with people of [illegible] descent than in the population as a whole. In Nyasaland, where there is a sharper cleavage into old Ngoni villages and conquered Cewa villages, the old Ngoni are characterized by a greater, and the Cewa by a lesser, incidence of patrilineal marriage.

Divorce

In the old days there was no way in which a woman could divorce 586
her husband. A man could divorce his wife at any time by sending her back to her own people. The usual procedure nowadays, except in cases of adultery, is for the man to give his wife sixpence or a shilling

[1] [illegible]

/4 cont'd/

701 national basis to include all the adolescent males in the tribe, what-
ever their origin. Women were grouped into corresponding regi-
182 ments. This system broke down after the first World War, when so
many young men went away in the fighting. To-day the great exo-
167 dus is not to war but to work, to the mines of Southern Rhodesia
and elsewhere, and the incidence of labour migration is so high
[162] that it is not unknown to find a village in which there is no adult
male resident. Part of the exodus is seasonal, and many men and
241 women, as well as children, find employment on the tobacco farms
424 of the district and in Fort Jameson Township.

II

241 The staple crop is maize, of which enough is grown to pro-
433 vide in good years for a small surplus for sale to the tobacco farms
and the Administration. Tobacco is not grown by Africans for sale,
except within the villages, but vegetables and a little rice and fin-
231 ger millet are sold to Europeans. Cattle are kept in the fly-free
areas, and play an important but diminishing part in social life as
[531] the means of paying bridewealth, but the sale of cattle is not at
present a regular affair. Their principal use is as a form of capital
[681] investment that can be called up to meet damages and fines awarded
by the Courts.

161 The population of the tribe is about 60,000, the majority liv-
131 ing in the Ngoni and Msandile Reserves, both near to Fort /5/ Jame-
son. The remainder live on the tobacco farms or in Fort Jameson
631 Township. Villages vary in size from settlements of three or four
huts to large clusters containing up to 500 people. The average size
of a village is about thirty huts with a population of 100.

611 The Ngoni conquerors reckoned descent in the male line,
while most of the people whom they conquered and with whom they
married traced descent through the mother. To-day for practical
[illegible] purposes, descent is omnilateral, in that any connection through a
male or female ancestor can be made use of as the occasion demands.

/9 cont'd/

224 the hunt walks in the middle of the line, with a responsible person posted on each flank. A started animal, if not shot by the guns, usually turns to run parallel to the line of hunters, who hurl spears and knobkerries at it, and send their dogs after it. The chances of escape for a hunted animal are fairly high. Animals are also trapped, usually with a piece of meat tied to the muzzle of a gun. Hunting with nets is sometimes undertaken in the wet season. Rats are caught in small conical traps baited with beans. The rat chews through a piece of string and releases a green stick, thereby strangling itself.

[714] Shields, once the pride of the Ngoni armies, are not carried on hunts and are infrequently seen.

VI

291 [177] It is only the old men who still wear skin garments, and then only as additions to European style clothing. Men are dressed in khaki shorts and shirts, long trousers, cast-off European clothing, or clothes brought back from the army. Often two shirts are worn on top of one another. Women wear a blouse, a skirt tied on a tape, a cloth wrapped round on top of the skirt, and a small cloth tied round their waist. [854] If carrying a baby, the cloth supporting the child is slung over the left and under the right shoulder, and another cloth may be wrapped round the woman and child under her armpits. Dresses are also worn, and sometimes a singlet under the blouse. Shoes are less common for women than for men. Men /10/ wear a [177] variety of European style hats, but women wear only embroidered cloths or berets, or in the case of poorer women, plain bands of cloth.

Children go naked, or may be draped in whatever garment, of whatever size, happens to be available. If the money is there to pay for them, boys are dressed in shorts and shirts, and girls in little dresses.

304 [177] In the old days, every adult had slit ears, but this custom has died out. Women nowadays pierce their ears if they wish, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a small slit made as a

The art of cultivating the ground is only now being learned by 241 [176]
the Ngoni. Formerly this was the work of the slaves. The [267]
masters knew how to kill not to till. The soil is fairly rich
though not nearly so fertile as what is found at the lake shore [134]
and in the deep valleys between. Maize is the great crop. But
owing to the devastation of locusts for several years in succession, [131]
the Ngoni have learned to plant also reserve gardens of kasava,
for the locusts and drought can scarcely affect this crop. A great
variety of vegetables is cultivated, peas, beans, tomatoes,
pumpkins, and so on. I have counted a variety of twenty-two
different vegetables in the gardens beside one village.

These vegetables are used as relish, but the staple food is always 262
maize porridge, and a tasty dish it is. The maize is well cleaned,
ground into a fine flour, and when cooked by a clever woman [250]
makes a most tempting dish of white porridge. The relish may
consist of a piece of stewed fowl or goat, or well boiled vegetable.
The greatest dainty that was ever offered to me was a dish of
lovely maize porridge with relish of stewed caterpillars. I did
without the relish on that occasion. An interesting thing about
these caterpillars is that they live on the top of trees, and the [300]
natives, to get at them, will hew down the tree. You can see how
delicate a dish it makes if every caterpillar in the dish has been
got at the cost of a tree. They take the place of the old European
dish of peacocks cooked in their feathers.

No native thinks he has eaten until he has had his porridge. 261
A missionary whom I know once unwisely gave a feast to his
elders, feeding them on European food. They ate till they could
eat no more, then stretching themselves, and after politely expressing [164]
their satisfaction by audible sounds of satiety, they rose and
and said, "We must now go home to our porridge."

The maize and vegetables are grown with very little trouble, 243
but there is also a species of millet which is largely cultivated,
and at great cost to the country. The ground has to be carefully
prepared, trees are hewn down in the hot season, and left to dry
up in the blazing sun. The whole patch of garden is covered
over with these trees and the branches, then when the first clouds
appear, the wood is fired. For a day it blazes, and then during
the gathering of the clouds the atmosphere is thick with the
smoke of burning trees. The rains come and wash the carbon
into the soil, and it makes an excellent fertiliser. But the crop
exhausts the ground in two or three years, so another patch of